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Arab-Israeli Talks

'Understanding' Could Lead to 'Arafat-Peres Meeting

NC2303191294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1735 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 23 Mar (MENA)—The Palestinian-Israeli negotiations began in Cairo this evening. The Palestinian delegation is led by Nabil Sha'th, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and the Israeli delegation is led by Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Amnon Shahaq.

In a statement to correspondents before the negotiations, Dr. Sha'th said: We came here to avoid another massacre in Hebron.

Uri Savir, Israeli Foreign Ministry director general and a member of the Israeli delegation, said: The delegation held extremely good negotiations in Tunis and we are continuing our negotiations in Cairo.

Dr. Sha'th said that the Palestinian and Israeli delegations will try to reach agreement on international protection for the Palestinians living under occupation with a view to resuming the negotiations to implement the self-rule agreement in Gaza and Jericho first. These negotiations were suspended after the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in Hebron on 25 February. Dr. Sha'th expected the Israeli delegation to provide answers to proposals made the day before yesterday in Tunis during the negotiations between the two delegations.

He added: The negotiations in Tunis made some progress and we expect to hear what the Israeli delegation has to provide in the way of answers.

Dr. Sha'th said: We want a speedy implementation of the UN Security Council resolution on protecting the Palestinians.

Diplomatic sources in Cairo said that if an understanding is reached on the protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territory during the session of negotiations tonight, a meeting between Palestinian President 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres could be held during the next 24 hours to pave the way for the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho First agreement.

There were reports that 'Arafat and Peres are expected to meet in Paris tomorrow, Thursday.

Sha'th on Cairo Talks, Palestinian Police Force

NC2303131494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 23 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak today received a letter from Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated this after receiving the letter during his meeting today with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's political adviser.

Musa said he and Dr. Sha'th discussed recent developments from the Palestinian and Israeli points of views and the situation in Hebron.

On the other hand, Dr. Sha'th stated that he has come to Cairo to continue the negotiations started in Tunis to insure the speedy implementation of the Security Council resolution [904] and provide the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, especially in Hebron, with protection in view of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre.

He noted that today's meetings, as well as the conference for supporting the Palestinian police that will begin in Cairo tomorrow, will focus on providing safety and security for the Palestinian people, particularly in Hebron.

Dr. Sha'th said that the Palestinian delegation under his chairmanship and the Israeli delegation under the chairmanship of Amnon Shahaq, the Israeli chief of staff, will hold a meeting later today to resume the Tunis negotiations on implementing the Security Council resolution and insuring protection for the Palestinian people.

He added that tomorrow's meeting is to decide on the number of Palestinian policemen needed to keep the peace in the Palestinian territories. It has become clear after the Hebron massacre that there is a dire need for Palestinian policemen who are capable of establishing security.

Sha'th described the Security Council resolution on the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre as good, despite the U.S. reservations.

He said it is the first resolution that provides certain elements of international protection for the Palestinian people. It asks the Israeli side to provide protection to the Palestinian people.

On Israel's proposal to provide an international presence in the occupied territories by extending the term of representatives from the Red Cross and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the occupied territories, Sha'th said that the presence of these two organizations does not obviate the need for international presence as stipulated in the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and the Security Council resolution. He noted the continued suffering of the people in Hebron, who have curfews imposed on them.

Shahaq: No Agreement Reached on Any Issues

TA2403111894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Major General Amnon Shahaq, deputy chief of staff and head of the Israeli delegation to the talks with the PLO in Cairo, has said that the sides have not reached agreement even on one of the issues on the agenda. There is a gap in the positions of the sides, and the discussions will continue today, he asserted.

Replying to a question by our correspondent in Cairo Arye Gus, Maj. Gen. Shahaq said the atmosphere in the talks was normal. He added that the operation against terrorists in Hebron yesterday had nothing to do with the ongoing talks with the PLO. It is a terrorist event, and we will fight terror wherever it is uncovered, he stated.

Our correspondent has learned that the discussions are currently centered on the number of foreign observers to be deployed in Hebron, the size of the future police force, and who will command it. Israel opposes the Palestinian demand to set up a force of no less than 1,000 [as heard] troops. Our correspondent adds that Israel will apparently not object to having the international observers carry guns for self-defense.

Conference on Palestinian Police Opens in Cairo

NC2403112394 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] A conference on supporting the Palestinian police, under the auspices of Norway and with the participation of 25 states, in addition to the World Bank and the UN, opened in Cairo today.

Prior to the conference, a meeting was held among Dr. Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation; Israeli Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir; Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs; Russian Middle East envoy Viktor Posuvalyuk; and Norwegian Foreign Ministry adviser Larsen.

Ross Arrives for Conference

NC2403114694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process, stated upon arrival in Cairo that the conferees meeting to discuss financial aid for the Palestinian police force will discuss all issues relating to this force. He expressed his belief that the talks will proceed very well. He has come to Cairo to join talks, which started here today, on financial aid to be allocated for the Palestinian police force

Mr. Ross was late for the meeting because the plane he was flying in from Amman airport was delayed due to technical reasons.

In another development, Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, stated that the agenda of today's talks includes financial aid to be allocated to the Palestinian police force and that the amount of aid will be set according to the scale of the armaments and the size of the force.

It is known that 25 countries are taking part in these talks, in addition to the United Nations and the World Bank.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syrian 'Veto' on PLO Halts Meeting of Cordon States

PM2303101194 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Syrian 'Veto' on PLO Torpedoes Cordon States Meetings"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Highly placed Jordanian sources have stated that the formula governing the meetings of the Arab cordon states, namely Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and the PLO, probably no longer exists and no coordination meetings are expected to be held in the near future.

The sources added that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' had stated frankly at Amman airport on his latest visit that the PLO had ruled itself out of all coordination frameworks when it signed the Oslo agreement in Washington last September.

The sources expected the five-party cordon states formula to be replaced by coordination meetings between Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, who has resigned from the PLO Executive Committee, also ruled out the possibility of a cordon states meeting in the near future. In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT he said that "such meetings came to a halt when the PLO leadership solitarily signed the Oslo agreement, which made Damascus emphatically object to the PLO's presence at coordination meetings. [no closing quotation mark]

Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, tried unsuccessfully to soften the Syrian position and to call for a coordination meeting attended by the five parties. The valid formula now is one of consultation between the three parties. That was clear when President Hafiz al-Asad, in his conversation with U.S. President Bill Clinton after the Security Council passed its resolution 904, said that Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon had agreed to resume the negotiations with Israel.

Political observers in Amman point out that Cairo is no longer very enthusiastic for a coordination meeting of the cordon states and that at present it gives priority to the implementation of the PLO-Israel Cairo agreement, over which Cairo had a diplomatic clash with Washington when President Clington called for the transfer of the venue of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations to Washington. That disagreement was resolved on the basis that the final agreement between the two sides would be signed in Cairo.

Arab League Urges Protection of Palestinians

NC2403133394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1245 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League General Secretariat has urged the international community and the two sponsors of the peace process—Russia and the United States—to immediately and urgently adopt the necessary measures that would guarantee Israel's respect of international legitimacy's resolutions.

The Arab League also called on the Security Council to provide as soon as possible the mechanism necessary to protect the Palestinian people against the atrocities carried out by the Israeli occupation forces.

In a statement issued today, the Arab League General Secretariat says that in the past it had warned of acts of violence against the Palestinian citizens in the occupied lands. In its statement, the Arab League says: At a time when the world is waiting for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 904 concerning the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, the Israeli occupation authorities have carried out an 18-hour siege of a three-story building in Hebron. The Israeli forces opened artillery fire on Palestinian citizens, killing a number of them, including two women, one of them pregnant.

The statement affirms that Israel has once again proved its disregard of international resolutions and the appeals of international society.

The Arab League said that Israel is endeavoring to torpedo the peace process despite its claims on the issue of peace. This might undermine the Arab public's confidence in the on-going efforts, in view of the clear contradiction between the call for peace and the efforts to achieve it.

Russian Envoy, League Chief Discuss New Role

NC2303150194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1305 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 23 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today received Victor Pasuvalyuk, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's special emissary, who is visiting Cairo. The talks dealt with the latest developments in the Arab arena and the developments in the Middle East peace process.

Afterward, the Russian official stated that he and the Arab League secretary general discussed the peace process and the direct practical steps that must be taken to advance the peace process. They also discussed the situation in Iraq and the Libyan-Western crisis.

Pasuvalyuk said that Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid welcomed an increase in the Russian role in the area, considering that Russia is a big power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a cosponsor of the peace process, and has interests and friends in the Middle East.

The Russian envoy said that Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid explained that the Russian role in the Middle East need not necessarily repeat or compete with the role of any other party. But it should be a constructive role working for the benefit of peace and stability in the region.

The Russian official affirmed that his country wants to confer with all the parties concerned to achieve stability in the Middle East. He also affirmed that Russia wants to resume the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

He said that Moscow has made enormous efforts to convince all the parties of the need to resume the peace process despite the difficulties facing it after the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in Hebron.

Sources Discuss King Husayn Visit to Oman, Qatar

94P50110A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Mar 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Husayn 'Abd-al-Ghani in Muscat and Salamah Ni'mat in Amman]

[Text] King Husayn Bin-Talal began a several-day private visit to the Sultanate of Oman for talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id about regional and Arab issues.

Informed sources speaking with AL-HAYAH thought it likely that the two monarchs, who have strong personal ties and conduct regular talks, would confine their discussions to the political crisis in Yemen. They have taken a mediating role and responsibility for the signing of the pledge and accord agreement, which lost no time in breaking down.

These sources indicated their belief that the visit of the Jordanian monarch and his talks in Salalah (Sultan Qabus' southern summer capital, about 1,000 km from Muscat) are what will decide whether the two sides will proceed in their joint mediation or whether they will give the opportunity to other Arab parties that have entered the crisis recently, especially President Husni Mubarak, who announced day before yesterday that he is trying to arrange a peace settlement in Cairo between the chairman of the Yemeni Presidential Council, Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, and the deputy chairman of the Presidential Council, 'Ali Salim al-Bid.

These sources said that Oman, which borders Yemen, feels uneasy at the continuation of the Yemeni crisis and the threat that it represents to the stability of the the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf. [They added that] it and Jordan have sent a joint military committee composed of officers from the two countries to prevent the outbreak of war between north and south Yemen.

The issue that has given these sources the impression that the two countries are studying the next step in their joint effort to solve the Yemeni crisis is the fact that a joint visit announced in Amman that the Jordanian and

Omani foreign ministers were to take to Yemen before the 'Id al-Fitr [13 March] did not take place.

King Husayn will also present to his host the permanent topic in their discussions since the second Gulf crisis—that of Gulf-Jordanian relations, which have severely deteriorated since that time. The Jordanian monarch will go on to Qatar after his visit to the Sultanate in an official visit that is his first to a Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] country (other than Oman) since the summer of 1990.

Observers in Muscat told AL-HAYAH that the visit to Qatar opens a new window for Jordan in the GCC, but does not necessarily mean that normalization with the rest of the GCC states has become imminent.

In Amman, Jordanian political sources yesterday opined that King Husayn's visit to the Sultanate of Oman within the framework of his tour to the state of Qatar is a Jordanian move aimed at exiting from the Arab isolation that has been imposed on it by the Gulf crisis and war and at apprising most of the Arab leaders of the likely collapse of the peace process in the region.

An informed political authority said that Jordan believes that the isolation it is still suffering more than three years after the Gulf crisis and war is part of the pressure being put on it within the framework of the peace process. A senior Jordanian official indicated that the United States stands behind the political and economic pressure that the Kingdom faces and the continuation of the Arab boycott of it. He pointed out that the continuation of the naval blockade of the Jordanian port of al-'Aqabah and the escalation of the International Monetary Fund's pressure with regard to foreign debt servicing have a direct relationship with Jordan's resistance to being pushed in the direction of a quick settlement with Israel without waiting for the achievement of noticeable progress on the other negotiation paths. The political authority says that King Husayn will inform the Omani and Qatari leaders of his concept of the results of the peace settlement between Israel and the PLO, and of its reflections on Jordan and intra-Arab relations. The Jordanian monarch made telephone calls to the leaders of Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and the PLO immediately after the Security Council issued its resolution on the Mosque of Ibrahim massacre, and the abstention of the United States from voting on the part of the resolution that considers eastern Jerusalem part of the Arab occupied territories, as mentioned by Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 18 Mar

NC2303203194

[Editorial Report] The following review of the 18 March issue of Cairo AL-SHA'B summarizes articles that are Islamic in nature.

CONTENTS:

1. Hebron Killings Condemned, Speakers Assail Jews, U.S.
2. Israeli Mosad Accused of Involvement in Monastery Attack
3. Writer Denounces Monastery Attack, Israel, Government Policy
4. Iraqi Minister Says Arabs, Muslims To Blame for Sufferings
5. SLP Official Denounces Government Policy, Demands Change
6. Muslim Brotherhood Denounces Clinton's Remarks on Jerusalem

HEBRON KILLINGS CONDEMNED, SPEAKERS ASSAIL JEWS, U.S.

The 18 March issue of AL-SHA'B continues to report protests against and denunciation of the Hebron killings and denunciation of the Jews and the United States during 'Id al-Fitr prayers in various parts of the country. It devotes part of the front page and all of page 3 to detailed accounts of demonstrations and sermons by Islamic leaders who condemn the "massacre," criticize Arab leaders' weakness, and call for breaking off the negotiations with Israel and for a jihad. The paper notes that security authorities surrounded many of the places of worship and took precautionary measures to guard against further demonstrations in many governorates. Worshipers chanted slogans against the Zionist entity and carried banners demanding revenge against the "criminal Zionists." Islamists took part in demonstrations protesting against the "Jewish delinquency" and weakness of the Islamic rulers. At the Mustafa Mahmud Mosque Square, Socialist Liberal Party [SLP] members and thousands of worshipers chanted slogans against the Jews and demanded that relations with the Zionists be severed. SLP members burned and trampled over the Israeli flag with their shoes and distributed a statement released by the Youths Federation on the "Jewish criminality" and the government's weakness.

The Muslim Brothers organized demonstrations in Hulwan, chanting revolutionary slogans against the Jews and their agents. The paper reports that prayers were held in Upper Egypt under the threat of weapons and that the Central Security Forces surrounded the places of worship.

In an approximately 270-word report on page 3 about 'Id al-Fitr prayers in Tanta, the paper says over 20,000 worshipers packed the sports stadium in Tanta amid a strict security blockade and that they were joined by women and children. In his sermon Dr. 'Abd-al-Fattah Salamah, professor and dean of the Koran interpretation branch at Umm-al-Qura University in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, focused on the Jews' "treachery" and "affirmed that America is the leader and protector of terrorism in the entire world." He criticized the Security Council and reviewed the tolerance of Islam and the prophet. Over 60,000 worshipers gathered at 'Abd-al-Halim Square, chanting the slogans: "O Jerusalem, we are returning" and "Muhammad's army will return."

In an approximately 190-word report on the same page on events in Alexandria by 'Amir 'Id, the author says masses of worshipers staged marches and chanted slogans denouncing the "Zionist carnage," the "languor" of Arab and Islamic regimes, and the Security Council's "collusion." In his sermon, Shaykh Ahmad al-Mahallawi noted the need to apply the Islamic shari'ah and involving Islam in the battle with the Jews. He said that Islam is "inevitably coming" and it will lead the world, provided that "we stick to the injunctions of God's book." He strongly criticized the secularists' domination of intellect and mass media, which make them smear "everything." In western Alexandria, placards denounced the "Zionist massacre" and criticized the government's stance on veiled women and transferring them to desk jobs.

Muhammad Hilal files an approximately 240-word report on page 3 on sermons in Kafr al-Shaykh. A mosque imam, Shaykh Faraj Zaki Faraj, denounces the Arabs' "languor toward the Muslim causes, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina and occupied Palestine." The report says the imam asks every worshiper to imagine he has a sister being raped in Bosnia and a brother being killed in Palestine, as was the case in the Hebron massacre, and that everyone should react accordingly.

An approximately 260-word report on events in al-Suways on the same page says al-Suways inhabitants lived the night preceding 'Id al-Fitr in a state of fear and panic as police forces deployed in the streets in a provocative manner and that policemen pointed the muzzles of their rifles at passersby. The Hebron massacre was the main theme of 'Id al-Fitr sermons. Islamic preacher Shaykh Hafiz Salamah said the massacre proved that the Arab governments participating in the peace talks are living in a state of "falseness and prevarication." The reports adds: "Shaykh Salamah stressed that jihad is the only way to liberate the Islamic land of Palestine, to establish its independent state, and to avenge the blood of the martyrs who fell as they kneeled before God while performing the dawn prayer."

Another 200-word report on the same page from the Aswan correspondent indicates that the security authorities flooded public squares with water, forcing the 'Id al-Fitr speakers to stay away from these squares.

In an approximately 1,500-word report on page 2, the paper reports SLP leader Ibrahim Shukri's speech at the party's conference on 28 Ramadan in which Shukri criticizes the Security Council for being unable to take a stand denouncing the Hebron killings. He criticizes the Egyptian Government, which "trampled over al-Azhar with the feet of its security men who threw bombs at its campus and arrested worshipers just because they wanted to say prayers for the souls of their brother martyrs of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque." He also criticizes the government's ban on demonstrations and its "loyalty" to Israel. Discussing domestic issues, Shukri also criticizes the Constitution and government policies.

ISRAELI MOSAD ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT IN MONASTERY ATTACK

In an approximately 760-word report on pages 1 and 7 on a recent attack on a Coptic monastery in Upper Egypt, the 18 March edition of AL-SHA'B cites "Asyut leaders" as denouncing the attack and indicating that Israeli Mosad intelligence agency personnel were involved in the incident to foment sectarian feuds between Muslims and Copts.

WRITER DENOUNCES MONASTERY ATTACK, ISRAEL, GOVERNMENT POLICY

In an approximately 1,000-word article on page 2, the author, Mahfuz 'Azzam, denounces a recent attack on a Coptic monastery in Upper Egypt, discusses the Hebron killings and a recent church bombing in Lebanon, and implicates Israel in the latter incident, citing other writers on the subject.

Commenting on the attack on the monastery in Egypt, he says: "In the name of every Muslim in this country, we announce our condemnation of this heinous crime no matter who did it. We emphasize the belief of the SLP and the entire Islamic movement—and indeed all the Muslims in Egypt, parties and groups—that any attack on a church or mosque is an aggression against this nation. We vehemently reject any bigotry against our brother Copts as we reject any bigotry against Muslims."

He says that the Israeli Government, "which is established on treachery, aggression, and usurpation of the Palestinian land" has a genuine interest in distracting attention from the al-Ibrahimi Mosque "massacre." He notes that while Israel is engaged in oppression, murder, violence, and terrorism, the president and officials in Egypt declare the need for normalization, dialogue, and peace with Israel despite Israel's countless crimes. This, he adds, takes place at a time when the president and his government refuse the principle of dialogue with the sons of this nation, whom they accused of violating the law and committing violence and terrorism.

IRAQI MINISTER SAYS ARABS, MUSLIMS TO BLAME FOR SUFFERINGS

Page 4 of AL-SHA'B features an approximately 1,500-word report filed by Salah Budaywi on the hardship of the Iraqi people in light of UN sanctions, the high cost of living, soaring prices, and the government's food rationing, citing the views of many ordinary citizens.

The correspondent says the Security Council has authorized each individual country in the world to do what it deems fit about releasing Iraqi frozen assets for the purchase of food and medicine and notes that the Arab and Islamic governments should have responded to that resolution and released $4 billion in Iraqi assets frozen at their banks. But, citing Iraqi Foreign Minister

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf in response to AL-SHA'B's question, the correspondent says the Arab and Islamic governments regrettably are still ignoring this situation. The Iraqi foreign minister is quoted as saying: "Government leaders, such as those in Spain, Switzerland, and two other European countries, relented and released the Iraqi assets." Therefore, the report continues, he [the Iraqi minister] believes that the main cause of the continuation of the Iraqis' suffering is currently an Arab-Islamic one.

SLP OFFICIAL DENOUNCES GOVERNMENT POLICY, DEMANDS CHANGE

In an approximately 3,000-word article on page 5, SLP deputy leader 'Adil Husayn deplores the Egyptian Government's cooperation and "collusion" with the United States and Israel in plots against the Somali and Sudanese peoples. In the introduction, he says: "Rulers in most of the Arab and Islamic countries, of course led by the rulers in Egypt, now publicly and without shame violate the Koran's text. Through their control of the modern media, especially the television, these rulers seek to delude the nation into following their depravity and forgetting God's commandments."

He discusses at length the Egyptian Government's contacts and cooperation with Sudanese opposition and the government's stance against an Islamic regime in Sudan, citing the Sudanese opposition's meetings in Cairo and the United States' and other countries' plans to partition Sudan. He says: "We are confident of God's support of the believers and know that the accomplishments in Sudan under the banner of "No god but God" have made Sudan secure in its food and necessary needs. What is more important is that the spirit of jihad has covered the Sudanese nation, which is now able to put up with its affliction." He adds: "With the rush to martyrdom, the Army and the popular defense, which include southerners, now have full control over all the national soil. Therefore, the Westerners have lost their cool and have raised their shrill voice and threats in the past months to intervene directly to partition the south and its surroundings, now that the rebellion has failed to fulfill this mission and the rebellion leaders have taken refuge abroad."

Generally he praises the Islamic regime in Sudan and denounces the Egyptian Government's policies toward Somalia and Sudan in collaboration with the United States and Israel.

After noting the Egyptian Government's role in Somalia in implementation of "Washington's orders," he addresses that government, saying: "What a bad deal, through which you will lose this world and the world hereafter. But don't ever go near Sudan and conclude a similar deal on it with the United States. If you think you can do something of the sort, I refer you to Almighty God's open commandment and prohibitions. If these injunctions are not obligatory for you, they are binding to us. In the name of these injunctions, our people will not agree to fight Sudan to obey the Americans and the Jews because this nation raises the banner of Islam with all its meanings of piety, strength, and might. This nation will fight you if you seek to embroil it."

At one point, he states that the Arabs have lost a great deal through their alliance with the United States in the war against Iraq and that the Gulf States were the first losers.

Concluding, the author says that he has written the article on Thursday morning before going to the State Security Prosecution for investigation because, in his words, he is charged with incitement against the government and with trying to bring it down.

He says: "I hereby declare to the nation that our entire party admits that it indeed encouraged and will continue to encourage the changing of rulers because this is the only way to improve the situation. There must be a strong and honest government and we want a peaceful change through elections. Do whatever you wish to us but we will continue to do our duty and will not fear your threats. Sufficient unto us is God."

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD DENOUNCES CLINTON'S REMARKS ON JERUSALEM

An approximately 140-word report on page 7 says that the Muslim Brotherhood has issued a statement denouncing U.S. President Clinton's remarks that Jerusalem will remain the eternal capital of Israel, and emphasizing that Clinton's statements represent a continuation of the "Zionist enemy's" racist settlement policy.

The statement says: "The Islamic nations regard with extreme anger the U.S. Administration's stances disparaging the Muslims' right to Palestine and holy Jerusalem. The complete silence of the Islamic world's governments, kings, and presidents is met with bad and bitter responses from the Arab and Islamic peoples."

The Muslim Brotherhood, the report says, urged the Islamic nation to denounce the U.S. stance on the Palestinian issue and "show popular anger at that stance, which is partial to the Zionist enemy."

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Phones Christopher on Israeli 'Aggression'

LD2303182594 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Last night, brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the state of Palestine, had an emergency telephone contact with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in connection with the aggression carried out by the Israeli Army's special units on the southern part of the city of Hebron and the destruction of some civilian houses under the pretext of searching for some wanted persons.

The Israeli attacks on the citizens led to the destruction of numerous houses and the death and wounding of a number of victims as a result of the rocket bombardment by the special units without concern for the lives, safety, and possessions of the civilians, the blood of whose brothers at the holy al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre has not dried up yet.

The brother President Abu-'Ammar pointed out that these kinds of Israeli practices would reflect negatively on the peace process and cause concern at this sensitive stage of the development of the situation in the Middle East.

The brother President Abu-'Ammar asked Secretary Christopher for an immediate intervention to put an end to this aggression against the secure citizens, who are being besieged as a result of the curfew imposed by the Israeli occupation forces since the brutal massacre at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque.

'Text' of 'Arafat Message to Palestinians

JN2403090294 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

["Text" of message from PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, identified by his nom de guerre Abu-'Ammar, to the Palestinian people; place and date not given—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. So lose not heart, nor fall into despair; for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith. If a wound hath touched you, be sure a similar wound hath touched the others, such days of varying fortunes we give to men and men by turns. [Koranic verses]

Brothers, family, our struggling masses, and our revolutionaries and mujahidin: I address you to express my appreciation and that of your brothers in the Palestinian leadership for your superb steadfastness and courageous stand, which has shown the great qualities of our people, especially at this time of calamity and hardship.

After the ugly massacre committed by the murderous settlers and the occupying army, our entire people stood up to defend their presence, their sacred places, and their dignity, as well as the hope they hold in their hearts as they wait for the moment the ugly Israeli occupation ends and the national authority materializes, leading the way to the establishment of the independent Palestinian state, with its capital our holy Jerusalem.

I address you in sincere and clear words; the words of those who kept the trust and, at the same time, put their life at risk, to enable our people to win their future, freedom, dignity, and independence.

With all brotherly feelings and frankness, I emphasize to you the importance of standing fast in these critical days. We should turn a blind eye to what some people are trying to do by spreading programmed rumors and a climate of despair.

I tell you very frankly that we are facing one of our fiercest battles at a time when our people, under the PLO, are banging, with all their strength, on the doors of independence and freedom. It comes at a time when the world community is looking forward to seeing the realization of the Palestinians' rights amidst all the successive events.

It is also one of a series of battles that we have not stopped fighting since the first bullet was fired on 1 January 1965. These battles were crowned by the start of the great national intifadah, which is continuing and growing, and which will continue to escalate until our peoples's objectives are realized; that is, until the occupation is terminated and the independence and freedom of our people, territory, and sacred places are realized.

The settlements were one of the obstacles that we faced, and are still facing, in our negotiations with the Israelis. The world community and the international resolutions support us in this regard and consider the settlements an obstacle in the path of peace. Therefore, we were always certain that these settlements would finally be dismantled and the settlers would leave our land. What is founded on myths is basically wrong. Events have confirmed the soundness of our position. The world has also become aware of the seriousness of this matter. Disarming the settlers has now become a basic starting point for dismantling settlements and removing them from our territory.

With the cooperation between units from the Israeli Army and the armed settlers, we are facing the same situation that faced our Algerian brothers during the first and second Lausanne Talks. We faced this dilemma in the same way we faced other dilemmas in the past. They only strengthened our beliefs and convictions in the justness of our cause. Therefore, we underlined this position, which is dictated by the national responsibility, and emphasized the need to provide international protection for our people and forced the world community to face its responsibility as regards this dreadful scheme.

While we were fighting a diplomatic battle in the Security Council to obtain a UN resolution and discussing among the Palestinian leadership the ways to run that battle, certain professionals in stirring seditions were sowing the seeds of suspicion, passing false judgments, and writing false statements. We did not pay any attention to their falsehoods because we have always avoided being pushed into side battles and we have always believed, and still believe, that the battle is with the occupying enemy. The battle revolves around the basic contradiction with the occupiers, it is not aimed at creating confusion, which is the dream of the enemies of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian homeland, and the Palestinian presence. Do not call each other by offensive nicknames. [Koranic verse]

I tell you, brothers, that we have shouldered the trust, and taken the pledge and the vow—the pledge of the pious martyrs and their vow. To honor our responsibility, we must firmly face all tests and trials and their fierceness should increase our firmness, faith, and determination. In moments of trial and challenge we must all stand as one with one aim. We must think of our responsibilities and search for all means of confrontation, including the assistance of public opinion and the bodies of international legitimacy, particularly the UN Security Council and the international and Arab bodies such as the Arab League, the Nonaligned Movement, the Organization of African Unity, the Islamic Conference Organization, and all friends in the world.

We fought fierce battles in the Hebron massacre, the Jerusalem and 'Ayn Qarah [Rishon LeZiyyon] massacres, as well as the Sabra and Shatillah and Dayr Yasin massacres, and the difficult confrontations in Janin and Rafah, the Triangle area, Galilee, Nazareth, and the Negev.

We have stopped the negotiations with the Israelis and have clearly announced that they will not be resumed before our people have obtained all guarantees to provide international protection for them and before the powder keg of the settlements, which is threatening the peace process, is removed and the perpetrators of the murders have been punished. The battle will not stop at this stage. We have many other details and our agenda contains fateful issues that require just solutions so that just peace can be established.

One of the urgent issues is the question of our detained brothers in the prisons of occupation. We will neither sleep nor rest until all of them win their freedom so that they can participate in the battle of building our national authority and independent state. We have resolutely refused all enemy attempts to categorize or classify them and refused the release of the Fatah detainees alone, despite the fact that they form the majority of the detainees. We insisted that all must be treated in the same way because they are the beloved sons of Palestine.

At these difficult moments, I appeal to you to stand united to confront this new situation. I ask our people everywhere to close ranks, realize national unity, and keep their hearts united at moments of difficulty and trial. We are a people of martyrs, revolutionaries, and mujahidin. I ask our people to expel all instigators of sedition and divisions from their ranks. Despite this darkness, the light of dawn is coming. The dawn and victory are coming. This ugly repression by the occupation authorities and their settlers remind us of the repression, tyranny, and killing that usually intensifies just before peoples win their independence. One salient example come to mind at this moment—the movement launched in Algeria by the hardline French settlers and their supporters from the military on the eve of Algerian independence. We must learn these lessons and understand these signs and defeat the Israelis extremists who are trying to hinder our triumphant march toward independence and an independent state whose capital will be holy Jerusalem. That even the apostle and those of faith who were with him cried: When will come the help of God? Ah, verily the help of God is always near. [Koranic verse]

Brothers and sisters, our struggling people. The Israeli authorities are continuing the same policy despite agreements signed with them to begin a new phase on the way to establishing a just peace. The Israeli soldiers are continuing their repression, attacks, and crimes, firing at children, women, and the elderly. In this way, Israel has continued to violate the Declaration of Principles. We have the right to seek all legitimate means of response and to look for all prospects that suit us to foil the attempts of circles hostile to peace in the Israeli military establishment and the armed settlers—circles that have had free rein to spread destruction and anarchy in their attempts to stop the wheels of history. We genuinely want peace, but we reject capitulation.

We seek a just peace and will not submit or surrender. We will not transform the peace agreement into an agreement of submission. I tell you that the Palestinian blood will not be cheap. This blood ignited the torch of our struggle and jihad—a torch that will not be smothered, with God's help. In honor of this blood, we will adopt all measures and stands required by our people's supreme national interests. We greet all the steadfast people in Hebron and in all parts of our beloved homeland. Greetings from revolutionaries to revolutionaries, the pledge of free men to free men.

On the eighth day of this month, the world celebrated international women's day while the Palestinian women stood firmly amid fire, bidding farewell to the martyrs and facing the occupiers' bullets and repression with indignation, sacrifices, and martyrdom. We greet the great Palestinian woman and we pledge to her that in the coming years she will celebrate women's day in a free, independent, and democratic homeland for the people of free and revolutionary men.

Sisters and brothers, I renew my pledge and vow to you. I tell you that difficulties will only increase our strength, faith, and firmness. A hammer breaks glass but flattens iron. We have taken speedy steps and offered thousands of martyrs and will not cease our struggle in all forms until our people obtain their full rights. Let this triumphant march continue. The path to the independent state still requires sacrifices, struggle, and suffering. However, our indefatigable stamina and unconquerable determination will continue. God bless our people, the generous people of martyrs and sacrifices. In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. God's good pleasure was on the believers when they swore fealty to thee under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts and he sent down tranquility to them; and he rewarded them with a speedy victory. [Koranic verse]

Revolution until victory.

Your brother, Abu 'Ammar

'Arafat Briefs Chinese Ambassador on Peace Talks

LD2303184294 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] received this afternoon the ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Tunis. Brother President Abu-'Ammar informed the Chinese ambassador about the content of the talks held recently in Tunis with the Israeli delegation and also about the content of the talks held with the U.S. and Russian envoys regarding the necessity of implementing Security Council Resolution 904 and particularly ensuring the international protection of our Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

Brother President Abu-'Ammar asked the Chinese ambassador to urge the Chinese leadership to exert efforts with all the concerned parties to implement the resolution rapidly.

'Arafat Sends Message to Indonesian President

LD2303183694 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] has sent a message to Indonesian President Suharto, chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, concerning the meetings that took place in Tunis in recent days with the U.S., Russian, and Israeli delegations. The message also dealt with the Palestinian requests related to the implementation of Resolution 904 and the provision of international protection for our people under occupation. Brother Abu-'Ammar urged Suharto to exert efforts with the concerned sides and at the United Nations for the rapid implementation of the resolution.

Brother Abu-'Ammar handed the message to the Indonesian charge d'affaires when he received him this afternoon.

Abu-Sharif on Peace Talks, Hebron Resolution

JN2303154594 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 18

[Interview with Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by 'Awdah 'Awdah in Amman; date not given]

[Text] ['Awdah] You were a close aide to President 'Arafat, but recently your role has been marginalized. Would you explain the reasons for this?

[Abu-Sharif] My relations with brother President 'Arafat are still cordial. These militant relations cannot be weakened. Within the framework of the ongoing peace process, the negotiating team attracts attention because it is charged with this task. Meanwhile, many leaders not directly involved in the negotiations are charged with other tasks. Regrettably, I have read many articles and reports that try to distort things and misinterpret them. As you have noticed, I did not respond to these attempts, because we face difficult tasks now. No doubt, the current stage is one of the most difficult stages of the struggle; it is a sensitive stage on the internal level as well, in terms of negotiations, foreign relations, and inter-Arab relations. It is natural to see different viewpoints regarding tactical points and the working plan and mechanism that must be followed in the interest of our people to achieve what can be achieved through the peace process, despite its difficulties. The objective is full Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory. This cannot be achieved by remote control.

Negotiations are being held with the Israeli enemy. He is a difficult enemy, not an easy enemy. When we talk with the Israeli enemy we must not forget we are talking with an enemy, regardless of its delegations' visits to Tunisia and the meetings in Cairo. We must not forget it is an enemy who tries to achieve as much as it can within the land for peace equation.

We believe the absence of coordination among the Arab parties involved in the talks will weaken the Arab position, or at least, strengthen the position of the Israeli negotiators. We see that the Israeli stand is united, despite the known differences between Shim'on Peres and Yitzhaq Rabin. We also see that it is stronger, although we know Rabin's majority in the Knesset is very small and that the Likud is strong. When we talk about the working mechanism, there are points that must be tackled to strengthen the position of the Palestinian and Arab negotiators. I believe the existence of different views and detailed discussions are important so we can form a sound opinion in the service of our people.

I would like to note the importance of Jordanian-Palestinian coordination, in particular within the framework of coordination among the Arab negotiating delegations. This must be united and capable of mobilizing Arab support. Without the unity of the Palestinian stand and the unity of the Arab position—which must be supported by all Arab sides—the position of each negotiating team will be weaker. Syria can negotiate in the Syrian track, but it will be stronger when it is supported by a united Arab position. This will make the U.S. Administration think carefully before taking any stand to appease Israel.

I believe neither the initial agreement nor the periodic meetings of the Arab parties involved in the process are enough. There must be continuous meetings on general and special issues. The general issues relate to the Arab-Israeli talks. The specific issues deal with each track. This will save us from suspicion and from falling into Israeli traps.

['Awdah] I take it from what you say that the state of your relatonship with 'Arafat is fine?

[Abu-Sharif] Yes, it is as you describe.

['Awdah] But you are in Amman now, while Tunis swarms with top Israeli, Russian, and U.S. officials, including Dennis Ross. Aren't you being marginalized?

[Abu-Sharif] I haven't been to Amman for a long time. I am here visiting relatives and friends. I leave for Tunis tomorrow. I know that Israeli, U.S., and Russian delegations are in Tunis to promote the implementation of the latest UN Security Council resolution.

['Awdah] Hasn't 'Arafat invited you to join these talks?

[Abu-Sharif] I am returning to my office in Tunis.

['Awdah] Do you have anything against the Cairo negotiations?

[Abu-Sharif] People may have their own opinions about the peace process and the media handling of it.

['Awdah] Can you be more specific?

[Abu-Sharif] Take the Hebron massacre, for example. The tragedy might have been seized upon to put Israel on the spot. The tragic massacre stigmatizes not only Israel but the entire West. We should have mounted a worldwide campaign that did not stop until Israel was forced into drawing up a timetable for the withdrawal of settlers from the occupied territories, simultaneously with the withdrawal of Israeli troops. The issue is not about disarming the settlers. The settlers and settlements are part of the establishment of occupation. This objective might have been obtained away from the battlefield or even the diplomatic front. Ninety-five precent of a campaign for such an objective must be fought through the media. The al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre is a black chapter in the annals of the West. We ought to have used it to mobilize world opinion and put all the governments of the West in the dock.

Let me ask you this: Suppose a Palestinian extremist shot 10 worshipers at the Wailing Wall? How would the Israelis have handled such an incident? Wouldn't they have turned the world upside down?

['Awdah] And since, as you say, your relationship with 'Arafat is fine and you are his media adviser, what stopped you from launching this media campaign?

[Abu-Sharif] No comment.

['Awdah] Then you are not 'Arafat's media adviser any more?

[Abu-Sharif] I still hold that position. I have no regrets over my optimistic outlook about the peace process.

['Awdah] At the 20th session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers, you told me you were optimistic about the chances of an independent Palestinian state. Now, three years on, nothing significant has been achieved.

[Abu-Sharif] I never had any illusions that the peace process would be not be long and arduous. Even now, I dare say that, in spite of everything, the peace process will move forward. The whole exercise is not up to the local players. There is the international community's will to put in place the land-for-peace formula, no matter how much time and effort, and even blood, that will take. Israel is in a difficult position. It is not as if it is being dragged to the peace process against its will. Peace advances its own interests. However, it is an illusion to think that the peace process will be an easy ride. After all, we are negotiating with an enemy.

Once again, let me stress that without proper and real intra-Arab coordination, between the Palestinians and Jordanians in particular, we will get nowhere.

['Awdah] I would like to remind you that, in Algiers, you told me the peace process would lead to peace, an independent state, and Jerusalem.

[Abu-Sharif] I still say the same. The peace process has not moved very far, but it will snowball as soon as Israel begins to withdraw from Jericho and Gaza. When withdrawal begins, the snowball will create its own momentum, grow larger, create a totally new psychological climate, and make it impossible for settlers to stay in a predominantly Arab environment that was usurped by colonialist aggression. We have to start the process, Once the withdrawal begins, it will continue until the end.

['Awdah] They say you have a personal view about unity between Jordan and Palestine.

[Abu-Sharif] Union between Jordan and Palestine exists. What separates them is the Israeli occupation. Logically and psychologically, you cannot divide a family, half of which is in Amman and the other half is in Jerusalem.

['Awdah] Has 'Arafat assigned new duties to you? Have you anything to say about that?

[Abu-Sharif] Certain duties do not need statements. This is natural.

['Awdah] You were the first to call for a Palestinian-Israeli meeting. Do you regret it?

[Abu-Sharif] This is true, and I do not regret the initiative. I was the first to propose the implementation of the international resolutions through direct negotiations with Israel and under the slogan of establishing an independent Palestinian state that will live in peace next to Israel. It is not land for peace, but land and a state for peace. I still demand the same, and I call for the implementation of Resolution 242. By the way, this resolution applies to East Jerusalem, too. It is wrong to raise an argument about this issue and to deal with Jerusalem separately. Resolution 242 covers East Jerusalem automatically. Therefore, it is wrong to deal with the issue of Jerusalem as if it were a separate issue. Dealing with Jerusalem separately will enable other parties to say yes or no, while insisting on Resolution 242, which covers Jerusalem, means it is natural for Jerusalem to be included in Resolution 242.

['Awdah] You prepared for the political process before the Madrid conference. You may have read unpublished documents in which the United States made promises to President 'Arafat and then ignored them.

[Abu-Sharif] Yes, Washington and the PLO exchanged documents, including the letter of invitation to the peace conference and the letter of assurances. These are documented. However, I can say a certain party may disavow such documents when the political situation changes. What is important is that the Arab front should remain unified to impose its respect on other parties.

['Awdah] Are there documents other than the letter of invitation to the peace conference and the letter of assurances?

[Abu-Sharif] President Bush and President Clinton exchanged official letters and documents, which contain a U.S. pledge to implement the land-for-peace formula and Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, to give the Palestinian people their full legitimate political rights, and to guarantee Israel's security. All these documents were worked out before and after the Madrid conference.

['Awdah] Did the PLO and Washington exchange secret documents and letters?

[Abu-Sharif] Undoubtedly. There are secret things and documents that have not been published.

['Awdah] Do you believe Washington's decision to abstain from voting on the paragraphs of the recent UN Security Council Resolution Number 904 pertaining to Jerusalem and the occupied territories reflects a U.S. retreat from pledges it has made to Palestinians?

[Abu-Sharif] I do not believe this reflects a U.S. retreat. In the same vein, I cannot see it as reconfirmation of previous U.S. stands on the issue. Washington's abstention from voting on the paragraph pertaining to Jerusalem has clouded the issue. Hence, the U.S. position must be clarified. The U.S. Administration cannot provide an explanation for its stand unless Arab negotiators make a joint official demand, asking the United States to explain its position. For my part, I support His Majesty King Husayn, who recently said he will demand an official explanation for Washington's decision to abstain from voting, because abstention is neither yes nor no. We do have official letters from the United States, explaining its position toward occupied East Jerusalem.

['Awdah] You are reported to have had your own views toward the Cairo and Oslo accords. Given the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, what do you have to say?

[Abu-Sharif] I believe events have superseded these two agreements. For example, in the Oslo accord, the Israelis did not acknowledge the need for an international presence in the occupied territories. But, in the aftermath of the massacre, the Israeli Government endorsed an international presence. This step forward is not enshrined in the accord. The Israeli Government agreed to deem two Israeli organizations extremist and terrorist to pave the way for evicting them from the city of Hebron. This is another step forward. Additionally, the release of a large number of Palestinians is an accomplishment, because it was not scheduled. Undoubtedly, the talks currently under way in Tunis are addressing the ways and means of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 904. The talks are addressing the definition of international protection. The deployment of Palestinian policemen in the city of Hebron was not enshrined in the Oslo accord.

['Awdah] You have deemed the Oslo accord an accomplishment, although you have not contributed to it. However, it is reported that your private comments on this accord are different from the public comments you make on it. How true is this?

[Abu-Sharif] There is no doubt that the Oslo accord is a significant accomplishment. I have articulated this position in private and public. This is because we will establish Palestinian national authority on any inch of territory Israeli troops vacate, as the Palestine National Council sessions of 1977 and 1974 advocated. Israel has agreed to withdraw from the territories. Anyone who believes liberation is achievable by a knockout stroke is wrong. The liberation of our Palestinian territories is achievable only by degrees. The important thing is that we remain steadfast until the implementation of the international legitimacy resolutions, after which there will be comprehensive peace. Comprehensive peace will be the outcome of joint struggle by all Arab sides.

['Awdah] I would like to raise the question I first posed to you regarding the reports that Yasir 'Arafat has marginalized your role after he reached the conclusion that the Palestinian information institution has failed to pave the way for an agreement with Israel. Likewise, the Palestinian negotiators have failed to reach an agreement with Israel. Meanwhile, Palestinian secret channels have been successful in this regard. What is your comment on all this?

[Abu-Sharif] Failure and success cannot be judged by a single specific issue. We should use the terms success and failure when we address the overall outlook regarding the accomplishments of the Palestinian information institutions, the magnitude and effectiveness of which vary. Hence, I cannot speak of the success or failure of the information institution, because there are actually various information institutions. But, the Palestinian information institutions can undoubtedly do more and do better to address events and developments.

Al-Hasan Criticizes PLO Policy, UN Resolution

JN2203132594 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 22 Mar 94 pp 22, 23

[Interview with Hani al-Hasan, Fatah Central Committee member, by Mufid 'Awwad; place and date not given]

[Text] ['Awwad] To begin with, let us try to put the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in the context of the ongoing Arab-Israeli contacts.

[Al-Hasan] In order for us to make sense of why it took three long weeks to pass the UN Security Council resolution on the massacre, we need first to ask why the massacre happened. It is believed by some that the massacre was committed by a murderous, psychopathic settler. The massacre was really the product of a debate inside the Israeli security services on how to handle Palestinian policemen in the impending self-rule authority. The recruits for the future Palestinian police force can be expected to be patriotic young men victimized by occupation. The Israeli security establishment goes on to argue that, driven by an urge to exact vengeance, many of these Palestinians may take it out on settlers. The Israeli security establishment also fears a mounting militant spirit among the Palestinians, buoyed by confidence that they are achieving success.

There were two trends of thought within the Israeli military security community. The first was that If the Palestinians should break the Gaza-Jericho accord by attacks on settlers, they would reply with the proper means. The second trend, which, incidentally, has prevailed, argued that right from the beginning the security forces should create a climate of fear, warning the Palestinians of the dire consequences of any attacks they might mount on the settlers after April, 1994, especially since it was Fatah, in particular, that carried out most of the armed attacks inside the occupied territories, notably in the West Bank, since the signing of the Oslo agreement.

Hence Israel's resort to direct and open terror, as seen in the bloody and savage Hebron massacre, to instill panic and fear among the Palestinian population.

['Awwad] So you think the massacre was perpetrated in implementation of a decision made at the highest Israeli security levels?

[Al-Hasan] Absolutely. But what Israel did not bargain for was the scale of the Palestinian popular pressure inside Palestine and in brotherly Jordan. Israel was further surprised by the angry and strong Islamic, Arab, and even international reaction. Acting in character, the Israelis then set about an operation of damage control.

The talks in Washington were held within the framework of a feverish Israeli effort and must be seen in this light. Rabin's visit to Washington was made to shore up his popularity. Tel Aviv, Tunis, and Washington all wanted to make the most of the massacre. It must be said that the Tunis leadership failed to use Israel's crime at the Ibrahimi Mosque to expose its true ambitions in the occupied land and push for the world to assume its humanitarian and moral responsibilities toward the Palestinian people. Now what do I mean by the Tunis leadership using the massacre? Let's not bury our heads in the sand. The Palestinian people are suffering from divisions while Israel is scoring major successes on the economic and international fronts. Any right-thinking person will tell you that the concessions made in Oslo and Cairo need not have been made—not under any circumstances. Even President Mubarak's adviser Usamah al-Baz said that there was a need to restore balance to the Oslo agreement. Even the Europeans are now talking about the need to send international forces to protect the Palestinians, and this is quite important. Simply speaking, the world is interpreting UN Security Council Resolution 242 so as to mean Israel is sitting in occupied rather than disputed territory.

The Palestinian leadership has no choice but to make what I would call a bold decision dictated by the national Palestinian conscience; namely admit that its political line is flawed. The split in Palestinian ranks and inter-Palestinian squabbling and Israel's gains are all the result of a mishandling of the negotiations.

['Awwad] Since Madrid?

[Al-Hasan] Yes, since Madrid.

['Awwad] What do you mean by the political line? You were one of the Palestinian leaders that laid down the foundations of a political settlement for the Palestinian issue?

[Al-Hasan] The Palestinians are being forced by Israel to negotiate with them unilaterally. This is the consequence of an Israeli argument that the Palestinians must enter into unilateral talks with Israel. Then there is the argument advanced by Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas]; namely, that if you are unable to get all that you want, you may settle for some of it. The result has been that Israel began talking about indispensable security settlements and dispensable political settlements. Israel thus capitalized on this argument by insisting that part of the occupied territories will not be vacated.

['Awwad] An example?

[Al-Hasan] For example, agreeing in Oslo to delay the Jerusalem issue to the second phase of negotiations was dangerous. Israel says the Oslo agreement postpones the Jerusalem issue. I wonder what Jerusalem they are talking about. Israel is not talking about East Jerusalem, the small area it occupied along with Arab and Palestinian areas in 1967, or about West Jerusalem. It is talking about today's Jerusalem, according to the occupation authorities' concept of two cities with boundaries that have been extended close to Bethlehem in the south, Ramallah in the north, and Jericho in the east. When we begin to discuss the subject of assuming power in the West Bank after a few weeks, greater Jerusalem, with an area that is more than 10 percent of the West Bank, will be excluded from the areas that will come under Palestinian authority because Israel's interpretation of Jerusalem is different from that of the PLO. This should not be accepted at all. Accordingly, agreeing to the current phased negotiations, that is, a transitional and then a final stage, means agreeing to splitting territory. Anyone who partitions land will also partition rights. Therefore, under no circumstances should we accept phased negotiations, although we might accept phased implementation.

In the letter of invitation to the Madrid [conference], the PLO accepted phased negotiations. This political line, which now prevails, is responsible for splitting the cause. We are now seeking security for Gaza and Jericho, but we are supposed to be seeking security for all Palestinians. The Palestine question is in a real impasse due to the phased negotiations. The PLO leadership should have benefited from the obvious international solidarity with the Palestinians—people and organization—after the Zionist massacre. This great national Palestinian support should have been employed to prove the indisputable fact that there can be no coexistence between settlers and Palestinians; it should have been used to immediately call for negotiations on the final solution as a new policy that will dictate new alliances and new coordination.

['Awwad] Why does Israel insist on phased negotiations?

[Al-Hasan] Israel believes the PLO should not call for the implementation of Resolution 242 at the first stage of negotiations because, it says, the PLO is not a party to that resolution.

['Awwad] How can the Palestinians break out of this impasse?

[Al-Hasan] The solution lies simply in coordinating with Jordan, which is a party to 242, and with Syria and Lebanon, for the sake of negotiating with one voice and one tactic and advancing or retreating together. The idea of one Arab delegation to negotiate all issues and deal with withdrawal as one issue, security as one issue, water as one issue, and mutual relations as one issue, can be proposed once again.

['Awwad] But Israel, whose policy is based on the tactic of dealing with Arab parties separately, will certainly reject the idea of a unified Arab delegation.

[Al-Hasan] We can then run affairs according to one policy and one plan on all "tables." For example, Syria and Jordan emphasize that no economic normalization talks will be held with Israel unless there is progress in political negotiations and unless Israel promises to withdraw from every inch of the Arab territories occupied in 1967, whether they are Syrian, Lebanese, or Jordanian territories.

['Awwad] Why doesn't this apply to Palestinians? They used to say the Palestinian position is weak.

[Al-Hasan] The helpless ones in the PLO said this. However, in the aftermath of the recent massacre, nobody can say the Palestinian situation or Palestinian awareness is weak. Therefore, receiving any Israeli delegation in Tunis before voting on the Security Council resolution was a big mistake. The wording of the Security Council resolution itself was very weak and wsa not in keeping with the horrible massacre.

['Awwad] As a prominent leader of the Fatah Movement and as a member of the Fatah Central Committee, do your political ideas on the peace process and your position on the Oslo accord reflect the views of the Fatah Central Committee or the views of a large number of the Fatah Central Committee members?

[Al-Hasan] I speak as a Fatah Central Committee member. I cannot claim to be speaking on behalf of the Fatah Central Committee. Still, recently, more Fatah Central Committee members believe there must be a reconsideration of all that has happened, and all that is happening. The recent statements published in AL-DUSTUR reflected this trend. Brothers Muhammad Jihad and 'Abbas Zaki [Fatah Central Committee members], as well as many others, see a need to seriously reconsider all that is happening. As for me, I believe we must mobilize Palestinian popular forces with clear political positions so they can pressure the leadership and encourage it to take drastic measures to change the course of the negotiations.

['Awwad] When you mention the word leadership, what specifically do you mean? Do you mean the PLO Executive Committee, or the leading PLO institutions? When you mention the word leadership, what do you mean? If you mean the PLO Executive Committee, four members of this committee have resigned, not to mention those who tendered their resignations earlier, that is, in the immediate aftermath of the Oslo accord. It is true that the PLO has been experiencing a legislative impasse since the resignation of Palestine National Council Speaker Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih. But, can we say the PLO leadership is experiencing an executive impasse? If the answer is yes, what will happen, since the current phase requires concerted efforts by all in the context of a harmonious Palestinian leadership that is directly responsible for the destiny of its own people?

[Al-Hasan] This question is extremely important and serious. It has been on my mind since you started this interview.

What closes ranks and unifies efforts is a clear political line. By the same token, what divides is a mistaken political line. With regard to the Palestinians, they can simply judge the proposed solution as to whether it is sound or not, in light of the national consensus it enjoys. This is because nationalist political forces cannot disagree on national issues.

Hence, we see the organizational impasse facing the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. One-third of the PLO leadership, in terms of the political quorum reflecting the various political forces making up the PLO, has resigned. Only the Palestinian People's Party has continued to promote the PLO's current policy line. With regard to the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front and the Palestine Liberation Front, their votes reflect opposition to, not support for, the current policy line. This means the PLO Executive Committee is currently denied a political and a numerical quorum, particularly since three of its members have resigned. In case new resignations take place, the PLO will face a real impasse.

['Awwad] This concerns the PLO in general. What about the Fatah Movement?

[Al-Hasan] With regard to the situation on the ground, there is a persistent, continuous, and serious Fatah demand that the course of negotiations be rectified, and the facts made available to the Palestinian people's masses. This is because the statements by some officials on the Gaza-Jericho accord were incorrect and untrue. They have not enlightened the Palestinian people about the facts.

['Awwad] Could you elaborate on this, please?

[Al-Hasan] While commenting on the Gaza-Jericho accord, and the Oslo accord, Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh has said displaced people will return home immediately. Undoubtedly, 700,000 displaced people were overjoyed when they heard this. Nobody can blame them, because they then thought they would be returning home the next day.

Now, it seems no more than 10,000 displaced people will be allowed to return over the next three years. It has been reported that the number may be increased to 20,000 or 30,000. All displaced persons must return together. This is common sense, and this is our conception of a proper solution.

By not allowing the repatriation of displaced people, Israel wants to fragment rights and territories. When the issue of releasing Palestinian prisoners was discussed in Taba, the Israeli delegation rejected a PLO proposal to form a committee to discuss the issue, contending the provisions enshrined in the Oslo accord underscore security for Israel. Once Israel's security is ensured, then pertinent measures can be taken by Israel, Israeli negotiators argued. That is why the negotiators formed the security and confidence-building measures committee. Accordingly, the release of prisoners must promote Israeli security.

As a matter of course, any level-headed person well-versed in conflict management would not have accepted any such ideas, the centerpiece of which is meant to promote Israeli security. This is because agreements should be balanced. Mutual interests must be promoted. Otherwise, there would have been no reason for engaging in negotiations in the first place.

Given all this, the Palestinian people and the Fatah Movement are witnessing calls for reconsidering the course of the negotiations. However, international pressures on the PLO, the agency that makes decisions regarding the Palestine question, are immense. This, of course, does not exempt the Fatah Movement of its responsibilities, because it is the mainstay of the PLO. Hence, we would like to say that silence is no longer golden. We must make an effort to spare the Fatah Movement any further external international pressure.

['Awwad] In your opinion, there is some erosion in the PLO's stand on how to run the conflict. In this regard, there were two memorandums on how to launch reform, but the signatories to both memorandums were constrained in one way or another. So experience proves reform endeavors have not produced any remarkably positive results. The Palestinian street does not view many reformists as serious because until recently they supported and advocated the PLO's political line and political leadership. What suddenly made the reformists take their positions? How can a radical change be introduced into the current political line?

[Al-Hasan] Anyone who studies the history of any political movement, including the PLO, will see that any history has its ups and downs. But, this is far from a collapse, which will indicate, if it takes place, a defect in the issue. Ups and downs, however, do not necessarily mean a defect, but may be the result of an upset in the balance of power.

The difference between collapse, on one hand, and ups and downs, on the other, is that the people, in the second case, are always supportive. But collapse usually results in the disengagement of you and your popular base. This is scientifically true, not a matter of interpretation. When you propose a political line representing the aspirations of the masses, these masses will rally around you. Only then will you have a broad base. The members of the organization will grow in number and quality and there will be enough money.

When you propose an incorrect political line that does not represent mass aspirations, the masses will abandon you, your organization will decompose, your revenues will decrease, your well-being and credibility will retreat before your people and the world, and you will collapse.

The crisis is one of the political line. The refugee issue, as an expression, is no longer mentioned in the refugee committee. What is being discussed is the return of part of the displaced people, not the repatriation of refugees. The refugee issue was postponed until a final solution is found, while preparations are under way for self-rule to assume the responsibilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency on the eastern and western banks. This is why the current Palestinian political line does not represent the refugees' ambitions. Therefore, Palestinian circles in Syria, Lebanon, and the camps reacted negatively and violently against the agreement and even attacked the PLO leadership because the current political line does not represent them, and might sacrifice their interests.

Therefore, I believe any talk about reform or democracy will produce no results unless a new political line is worked out that meets the aspirations of political and popular forces. Only then will circumstances for democratic action be available.

['Awwad] How can a new political line be worked out? What is the best mechanism for that?

[Al-Hasan] As I said, the current political line has produced negative results. This cannot be denied except by arrogant people who claim Palestinians are making achievements and scoring victories on the road to the liberation of the land.

Even after they enter Gaza and Jericho, there will be no guarantees that everything will take place quietly. The Israelis will not suddenly become peaceful. As I said, the recent brutal massacre is a studied security decision, which is being exploited by Israel to overwhelm Palestinian morale in preparation for the next stage of negotiations.

Hence, strong political pressure should be placed on that leadership to prevent it from relinquishing any inch of land in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem, and relinquishing the refugees' rights by creating a new political line to run the conflict.

['Awwad] Since the establishment of the PLO and until the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, the Palestinian masses have rallied around the PLO and its leadership, despite differences of views on the leadership's policy in running the conflict.

It is noteworthy that as a result of the massacre, the masses called for toppling the PLO leadership for the first time in 30 years. Are the demonstrations that the Palestinian people staged after the massacre a spontaneous expression of the Palestinian masses' reluctance to support the PLO leadership and the beginning of popular abandonment of it?

[Al-Hasan] The demonstrations in Jordan and inside and outside the occupied territories are undoubtedly an alarm to the leadership that its political line has become so weak that the masses will raise their voices and reject that line.

We should not fall into the faults of the pan-Arab movement in the seventies, when they said that Arab unity did not take place because of the absence of popular awareness. Holding the masses responsible is shortsighted, and evidence of the leadership's weakness. The people always have the right strategic sense and they express their true interests.

Our people believe the displaced will not return, that massacres against them will escalate, and that the Hebron massacre is the fiercest of all massacres, but will not necessarily be the last.

They also believe that Israel will determine Palestinian entry into Jericho. This means sharing sovereignty, which is a step toward sharing the land.

In other words, a part of the negotiations is based on the legitimacy of the occupation, and the wrong political line will, undoubtedly, serve the occupation and your enemy in the final analysis.

['Awwad] Abu-Tariq [Hani al-Hasan], this leads us to an open and angry question reiterated by the Palestinians: Are there no skilled Palestinians other than Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Jamil al-Tarifi, Nasr Yusuf, and the rest of the Palestinian delegation—with all due respect to those people—to confront Amnon Shahaq, Uri Savir, and others? How do you explain this?

[Al-Hasan] Once again, I believe the problem lies in the political line, because it produces people who refuse to take part in any delegation because they are not convincing in this line or it produces people who agree to follow orders. When the political line is weak and a failure, many forces and skills withdraw because nobody can rectify the wrong political line.

['Awwad] So, the choices are being made on the basis of loyalty to the existing political line, not on the basis of who is capable of handling the conflict?

[Al-Hasan] Yes. I was asked to supervise the multilateral talks. However, I set a condition of not holding the multilateral sessions between us and the Israelis in any Arab country. This means the rejection of normalization with Israel before realizing a political solution, that is, full Israeli withdrawal. I could have accepted the offer if the leadership had responded to this condition.

['Awwad] You mean no normalization before withdrawal?

[Al-Hasan] Yes. This is in line with the other Arab parties' stands on this issue. I believe the PLO should abandon the multilateral talks, or at least not hold them in Arab countries such as Tunis, where the PLO headquarters is located. Indeed, holding the multilaterals in any Arab venue will be a big step toward normalization, but in return for what? Nothing.

Israel so far has been recognized by India, China, and half the population of the world. It received billions of dollars in economic aid. It opened closed international markets to its exports. Israel's economy in 1990 suffered from a reduction in growth; the growth was minus 2. Today, however, and as a result of the huge aid it is receiving, Israel's economic growth is beginning and has reached plus one, and is on its way to become plus four.

Israel received all this through the political settlement process, Meanwhile, none of the Arab parties gained an inch of their occupied territories and not a single Palestinian employee received a milligram of security.

Why continue providing the Israelis with all the factors of benefiting from the peace process?

['Awwad] You said discussing the issue of Jerusalem at a later stage of negotiations shows the well-known Israeli intentions toward the city. How do you view the Jerusalem situation, since it is a sensitive situation that has been complicated in recent times?

[Al-Hasan] Jerusalem is Palestinian territory to which Resolution 242 applies. The basic principle is that Palestinians should have sovereignty over this territory. Afterwards, all issues on the religious level can be discussed. As for now, we can only discuss the issues of Israeli withdrawal and returning the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 to the sovereignty of the Palestinians, including Jerusalem.

We believe developments in the Jerusalem issue are a result of the wrong political line. The Vatican, for example, is beginning to talk about its responsibilities toward the Christian places. This is a big danger. However, when you adopt such incorrect behavior, the Vatican becomes free of its commitments toward what you, yourself, have been demanding and then abandoned or postponed to an unknown stage.

When there was Palestinian and Arab Islamic insistence on a united stand toward Jerusalem, the Vatican, throughout the past 50 years, was committed to this stand. However, when it found that some Palestinians are willing to discuss the issue of Jerusalem from a perspective that is totally different than what is known, the door opened wide.

The Vatican's interference is a very serious thing. However, we must admit that it is not the Vatican's fault. Indeed, the wrong political line is what opened the door. Moreover, President Clinton started saying that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Vice President Al Gore also began to reiterate that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It should be noted that Al Gore made new statements that were unprecedented by U.S. officials, in Clinton's era or in the era of those who preceded him.

The basic issue that must be implemented and championed deals with the need to implement the political line. No one thinks entering Jericho is a good start. On the contrary, the Israelis have a well-studied plan for the stage following the Gaza-Jericho stage. This plan began with the Hebron massacre. In the next stage, Israel will seek to create many problems, massacres, and obstacles. I strongly believe there still exists a secret Israeli decision not to withdraw from the West Bank and to play around with political formulas to guarantee their stay in the West Bank. This is because their real policy aims at signing a military agreement with some authority, that will exist four or five years from now, in order to keep their Army as an allied Army and not as an occupying Army.

However, this does not mean their plan will succeed because I have faith in the Palestinian people. I believe our people on both sides of the Jordan River can confront Israeli schemes. The biggest example of this is that the massacre did not weaken our people. Indeed, our 1948 Palestinians performed their full job in condemning the barbaric crime.

However, this does not mean that our people's sacrifices should continues until time eternal. This is especially so since a successful political leadership is responsible for accomplishing its goals with minimum material and human losses. However, what is happening is that we are paying dearly as a result of our political line in terms of martyrs, money, and time, while the accomplishments, as we see, are not in keeping with this long struggle.

['Awwad] [0002]s a Palestinian official and a leading Fatah member, you and your comrades have well-known stands in defending independent Palestinian decision making. Based on this, how do you assess the Palestinian leadership's relations with the partners in the common Arab destiny?

[Al-Hasan] Anyone who examines the current situation will simply realize there are Palestinian relations with Arab states, but there are no common policies between the PLO and the major Arab forces in the region. Of course, this is a serious disorder, considering that any political line derives its strength from the people's support and from its alliances with its partners and friends. If one of these two elements is missing, the political line will collapse. The current Palestinian political line is collapsing because it lacks popular support and common policies with the Arab states that are parties to the conflict. Therefore, in the first place, there must be joint Palestinian-Jordanian policies, then common Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese policies, and common policies with the broader Arab arena, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Libya, and Egypt. This is because common policies can create a political balance between the Arabs and Israel.

['Awwad] But, how can you explain the current distinguished relations between the Palestinian leadership and the Egyptian leadership?

[Al-Hasan] Egypt supports a phased settlement. But the brothers in Egypt have already restored their land, so they are no longer harmed by a phased settlement. I am sure that if Sinai was occupied, no Egyptian official would accept a phased settlement on behalf of the Palestinians. The proof is that President al-Sadat did not accept a phased settlement of Sinai. In a well-known press statement he said: No to phased negotiations, yes to phased implementation, and no to the relinquishment of any inch of Egyptian territory. Our difference with al-Sadat was because he said Sinai before Jerusalem—in other words, because he separated Jerusalem and Sinai. On the contrary, President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir said Jerusalem before Sinai and the Golan before Sinai. If there had been a common political line among the Arab peoples, we would have an important weapon in our hand, namely, summoning the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv, and expelling the Israeli ambassador from Cairo. This would jeopardize the entire situation—the current situation in which Israel is making one gain after another as a result of Israel's dealing with each Arab side separately.

['Awwad] The Palestinian leadership is under pressure to go back to the negotiating table. There are attempts to beautify this return to the negotiating table through temptations that do not include the acceptance of the PLO's conditions to resume the talks. The question is how Hani al-Hasan sees the future stage in light of this Arab situation and the imbalance in favor of Israel?

[Al-Hasan] I have written a lengthy study on the seriousness of accepting the Madrid paper. I still believe the situation in the Arab region has not been settled yet. This is because this entire region will witness many political earthquakes, especially after the international balance collapsed with the fall of the Soviet Union. A new balance is being built. Our region is the center of this new balance, because it is the center of energy and agricultural fields, which will produce unique agricultural stuffs in the future, taking into consideration the growing population of the world. A big conflict is raging in and around our region. This conflict is still hidden. The parties to this conflict are Europe, the United States, Russia, and Japan. The United States needs this region to be calm because it wants to control oil without any rivals in order to twist the arms of Germany and Japan and to obtain economic concessions from them. This is because the United States, which controlled more than 75 percent of the world's economy in 1948, now controls only 27 percent. The United States now spends a billion dollars every day—and I know what I am talking about—to pay its debts and interest. If the United States does not mend its trade balance, it will seek the help of the World Bank in the year 2007. So, the United States is trying to avoid this by controlling this region of the world.

There is a conflict in the world on the balance required in the Arab region. Following the change in the situation in Iran, an agreement was reached to set up a Turkish-Iranian-Pakistani economic and political axis as a basic part of the regional balance of power. There is a decision to turn Israel into an economic and military force in order to maintain part of the balance in the region or to guarantee this balance.

Former President Bush considered Egypt part of this balance, but President Clinton does not believe so. Therefore, these forces want to send us back to the Cold War days and not recognize a regional Arab force in this part of the world.

During the Geneva meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Clinton, al-Asad accomplished a great deal when he got the U.S. to decide that Syria will be part of the forthcoming regional structure.

Therefore, we, the sons of the East and West Banks—Jordanians and Palestinians—must discuss the issue from this angle. Where do we stand in the forthcoming regional structure? The issue is not that of 2 km in Jericho and 2 km in Gaza. It is where we stand in the forthcoming regional structure. If Israel becomes a regional force and the Arabs do not become a regional force, we will return to 1948 and to Israel's military and economic belligerence.

Israel—which spends 33 percent of its annual budget to repay its debts and its interest, 16 percent for security, and 19 percent for the army—is in dire need of security to maintain its role in the forthcoming balance. In other words, there will be no role for Jordan, Palestine, Syria, or Egypt. There will be no role for the Arabs.

In accordance with the Oslo accord, the Palestinian-Israeli talks will resume two years after the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho accord. During these two years, an international agreement on the situation in the Arab region will be reached. Meanwhile, Israel is planning to keep the Palestinians and Jordanians outside the equation.

Therefore, I believe the real battle is coming. I believe the problem of the Oslo accord is that it weakened the Palestinian position in terms of its regional role. The Oslo accord seeks swift economic prosperity to promote the economy of greater Israel. What is required now is to reach a Palestinian-Jordanian-Syrian-Lebanese concept to face the forthcoming stage. The PLO leadership will face darker political days if it does not immediately change its strategy, policy, and alliances.

We cannot gamble on Israel's good intentions. Zionism has continued to exist because more than one-half of the Israelis announce this clearly, and still consider Hebron and the West Bank the land of their ancestors. In his Washington address to the AIPAC [American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee], Rabin called this land Judaea and Samaria.

Therefore, I call on all national Palestinian forces and the political forces in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon to develop a concept about our forthcoming regional role on the political, military, and economic levels to confront the coming plot aimed at weakening the Arabs and Muslims.

The first task of Palestinian politics is to topple the economic section of the Oslo accord. This must be the headline of the coming stage because Israel wants to merge the $3-billion Palestinian economy with the $67-billion Israeli economy as a step toward absorbing the land and economy together.

We must know that Jordan is forcibly linked with whatever takes place in the West Bank and that the Palestinians are forcibly linked with what takes place on the East Bank. Therefore, we must resist any call on the East Bank for Jordan to ignore what takes place in the West Bank as well as any call for merger with the Israeli economy and ignoring what takes place in the East Bank.

PLO's Ghawshah Defines Position on Resuming Talks

NC2403090494 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Interview with Dr. Samir Ghawshah, PLO Executive Committee member and secretary general of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, in Tunis, by Fawzi al-Jundi in Cairo, date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Jundi] Undoubtedly the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations must rest on basic and firm principles. Could you tell us about the foundations of the Palestinian position on the negotiations during the coming stage?

[Ghawshah] As of this moment, no decision has been made by the PLO Executive Committee or by the Palestinian leadership to resume the negotiations. After the massacre at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, a decision was made to suspend the negotiations until the Security Council adopted a resolution. The Security Council has now passed Resolution 904, which includes a series of measures for Israel to carry out—such as disarming the settlers and providing for an international presence—and some other steps that concern the United States and Russia, the cosponsors of the Madrid Conference, to ensure the implementation of these measures. As of this moment, nothing has been implemented. During the recent talks held in Tunis with the Israelis, the U.S. envoy and his delegation, the Russian envoy, and Norwegian envoy Mr. Larsen, the discussion focused on the need to set up a mechanism for implementing Security Council Resolution 904.

[Al-Jundi] So it is clear that the Palestinian side is eager to secure international protection for the Palestinians inside the occupied territories so that such massacre will not recur?

[Ghawshah] Yes. Thus, the PLO leadership has underlined a number of issues, including the question of international protection and the need for the presence of international observers as stipulated under the Security Council resolution, and the disarming of settlers and confiscation of their weapons, which is also specified under the Security Council resolution. The PLO leadership has reiterated a number of demands: namely, international protection, the entry of a Palestinian police force into Hebron, the formation of tripartite patrols made up of international observers, Palestinian police, and Israeli police to ensure security in Hebron, and the need to ensure that the settlers leave the city.

[Al-Jundi] But how can the Palestinians benefit from the Israeli offer to expedite the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles [DOP]?

[Ghawshah] Before we talk about implementing the DOP we must first talk about a delicate and more urgent issue than the DOP, and that is the question of the settlers. How can the DOP be implemented when Israel continues to procrastinate over pulling the settlers out of Hebron? The urgent and basic question on which the Palestinian people want to see practical and tangible measures is the Security Council resolution, the withdrawal of the settlers from Hebron, and the banning of the settlers from carrying their weapons around among the defenseless Palestinians, who are being murdered and annihilated by the settlers and the Israeli Army. The Palestinian leadership will study the situation and make appropriate decisions in light of Israel's answers and practical measures, either deciding to resume the talks or to continue their suspension because of Israeli procrastination and failure to implement tangible and practical measures after the Hebron massacre.

[Al-Jundi] Do you believe that a high-level Palestinian-Israeli meeting could contribute to straightening things out and narrowing the differences between the two sides?

[Ghawshah] I do not think so. Several meetings have previously been held, both with Prime Minister Rabin, Peres, and other envoys. The main issue is the need for the Israeli Government to make a serious decision—that is, what are the measures that will be taken to end the murders by the settlers and pull them out from the Palestinian cities? Failing that, the cosponsors of the conference will have to take measures.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you Dr. Samir Ghawshah, PLO Executive Committee member and secretary general of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, who is on the line with us from Tunis. Thank you and welcome to Voice of the Arabs.

[Ghawshah] You are welcome.

Envoy Expects 'Positive Tendencies' From Israel

JN2303144694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with PLO representative in Cairo Sa'id Kamal by Sa'id Mu'addi on 23 March; from the "With the Midday Events" program—recorded]

[Text] [Mu'addi] PLO representative in Cairo Sa'id Kamal, have you received any information or instructions about canceling today's scheduled negotiations between the two sides in Cairo?

[Kamal] I have received no instructions from the Palestinian leadership about stopping negotiations today. I have received no such information from Dr. Nabil Sha'th, head of the negotiating delegation. As I understood from some sources, the point is that [PLO Executive Committee member] Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said that last night's incidents in Hebron and their results will influence the course of negotiations. I agree with what Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh says. The subject is not marginal. Anger still rages and trouble is increasing. Our people are suffering daily blows from everywhere. So, this will certainly have an influence. But, negotiations are one thing and what happens in Hebron is something else.

[Mu'addi] What is the present situation after the Tunis talks between the Israeli delegation and the Palestinian leadership? What subjects are on the agenda of today's meeting in Cairo?

[Kamal] Based on my reports through last night, I think the Israeli side has positive tendencies that will be demonstrated today during the negotiations between Dr. Nabil Sha'th and Mr. Amnon Shahaq on interpreting the question of protecting the Palestinians in the occupied territories, starting with the dear city of Hebron, its honorable people, and its heroic steadfastness. Therefore, this question will be the test for the arrangements that will be agreed on by the Cairo negotiations.

[Mu'addi] PLO representative in Cairo Sa'id Kamal, thank you very much.

[Kamal] Thank you.

Hebron Mayor Rejects Israeli Proposal on Police

TA2303152594 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 23 Mar 94 pp 1, 18

[By Sa'id 'Ayyad]

[Excerpt] Bethlehem, QUDS PRESS—Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zir, the mayor of Hebron, has stressed his rejection of the Israeli proposal to set up a Palestinian police force in the city that would be subordinate to the municipality.

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, al-Zir said: Our job is not to approve such things. He noted that "the municipality has specific tasks which do not include supervising a police force." Al-Zir said, however, that "the setting up of a police force in Hebron should be carried out in coordination with the PLO and Arab states that have ties with the city, such as Jordan and Egypt." He stressed that "the Palestinians are demanding the establishment of a strong, armed, and independent police force in Hebron."

Al-Zir added: We do not accept this force being subordinate to any Israeli authority no matter what shape this link might have. [passage omitted]

Habash Group Claims Responsibility for Attack

TA2403060294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Viktor Lashtsover, the Israeli guard shot in a terrorist attack near the Damascus Gate entry to the Old City of Jerusalem yesterday, has died of his wounds in Hadassah Hospital. The 40-year-old Lashtsover, a resident of Pisgat Ze'ev, immigrated to Israel three years ago from Russia. The Popular Front group of George Habash claimed responsibility for the attack, and police are continuing their search for the assailant.

U.S. Accused of 'Likudist' Stance on Issues

PM2303122594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Mar 94 p11

[Article by Bilal al-Hasan: "The U.S. Likudist Stance"]

[Text] The Likudist nature of the U.S. position on the Palestinian question is now a public phenomenon. It was manifest in the refusal to have Jerusalem mentioned as an occupied Palestinian city. Likud lost in Israel but it still rules supreme in Washington.

The Likud Party lost power in Israel but Likud logic still prevails in the U.S. political circles. In its approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict and especially the Palestinian question, the U.S. Administration appears to be more Israeli than the Israelis. It is a Likudist approach, putting pressure on the ruling Labor Party to rise to the level of its own extremism. The latest UN Security Council discussions presented a rare opportunity to demonstrate that U.S. (Likudist) position as it really is.

In the beginning, and despite the Hebron massacre, Washington was opposed to the issuance of any resolution by the Security Council and just called for a statement by the chairman only condemning the massacre. It was acting on Israel's behalf. When it realized the magnitude of the Palestinian and Arab fury as a result of the massacre and the extent of the world's sympathy with the victims of the massacre, Washington kindly agreed to let the Security Council pass a resolution provided it did not condemn Israel. The Council would have had to condemn the massacre as an anonymous act by unknown people in an unknown place with unknown responsibility and unknown culpability.

When the Palestinian side tried to link the massacre to the Geneva Convention on occupation and people under occupation, the United States opposed that and insisted that there should be no mention in the resolution of Jerusalem as an occupied city. It objected to that part of the resolution when voting took place.

The United States wants to force the world to act on the basis that the Oslo agreement supersedes everything that came before it, that all the Security Council's resolutions on Jerusalem, the massacres, the deportations, and the settlements, are now null and void and no longer constitute terms of reference for the negotiations, and that the only terms of reference are the Oslo agreement and what the negotiators agree upon in their meetings.

The Likudist character of the U.S. Administration is no illusion, nor is it an exaggeration. The Jewish lobby in the United States is openly pro-Likud. It had even opposed the Oslo agreement. Shim'on Peres, the architect of that agreement, had to go to Washington to persuade the Jewish lobby to accept it because it was in Israel's interest. Furthermore, the main Jewish figures in the U.S. Administration who are responsible for the handling of the Palestinian question, are also pro-Likud, from Dennis Ross to Martin Indyk. In addition to that

Likudist line, the U.S. Administration is willing to change the Security Council from an international body to a secretariat attached to the White House. Voting on the massacre resolution was postponed 12 times. The postponements took place after phone calls from Warren Christopher to the U.S. representative at the Security Council. That representative (not the the Council's chairman) then announced these postponements to reporters. When asked by reporters: Are you disappointed? She replied: I am always disappointed—having been transformed from being the representative of a superpower into a mere secretary receiving orders on the telephone. The U.S. position on the Security Council and on Jerusalem in particular is a dangerous position, very dangerous indeed, and its seriousness may even be greater than that of the massacre itself necessitating a general Arab awareness and a unified Arab stand rising to the level of the issue of Jerusalem and what it means to everyone.

Dennis Ross was threatening Yasir 'Arafat when he told him that discussion of the issue of the settlements and international protection would bring down Rabin. In other words, it would bring Likud to power. Examined in depth, that was not an American threat but rather a U.S. wish and a hint as to what could happen in the future as the U.S. Administration prepares to implement the Likud designs fully.

Algeria

Interior Minister Discusses Security Situation

LD2303225694 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1943 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Speech by Interior Minister Selim Saadi in Blida on 23 March—live or recorded]

[Text] Peace upon you all. On the occasion of my visit to this region, I would like to talk about a number of issues, especially regarding the situation in the country in general, and the security angle in particular.

My initial intervention will deal with three fundamental points, which should be addressed in order to comprehend the current situation in the country. These points are:

How did the general situation in the country evolve since the halt of the electoral process?

Second, how did this situation develop during the term of the HSC [Higher State Council]?

Third, what are the measures that the current power in office intends to take to achieve security, order, and to create the necessary conditions to establish a genuine democracy?

Regarding the first point, I believe that it will be essential to remind you, albeit briefly, of the situation that had prevailed in the country before the halt of the democratic process. Algeria went through a decade during which the affairs of the state were mismanaged and the resources of the country were squandered, a matter that resulted in a multifold crisis that reached its peak during the 1988 October demonstrations.

The message that young people, who were demonstrating, tried to put across was absolutely clear. These young people expressed the desire for a change in the political leadership, which led the country to bankruptcy. Unfortunately, this message was not grasped. For the sake of clinging to power, that regime decided to establish a suspicious democracy. Also, it laid down the 1989 Constitution that defined the rules of the democratic game and it frankly prohibited the creation of a party based on religious, linguistic, or regional basis. Such measures were implemented against a party that was founded on one of these criteria.

In other words, values shared by all the Algerian people were monopolized for political purposes. When the regime got entangled into its contradictions, it started gradually making concessions to the forces of darkness [reactionary forces] that had quickly laid their hands on public means [as heard] that existed in the municipal and provincial people's councils, the mosques, etc. They were getting ready to seize all the power despite the fact that they only represented a tiny minority in Algerian society.

This movement, Islamic Salvation Front, [FIS] never concealed its intention to eliminate the democratic system for good the day it seized power in view of the fact that this system, in its view, is a heresy and emanates from other civilizations strange to us. In other words, it used the democratic game as a means to seize power indefinitely.

Parallel to this, the security situation had experienced a continuous deterioration. Public order became threatened and the public authority trodden upon. Anarchy and confusion prevailed in all sectors.

The very rapid deterioration of the political, social, and security climate led patriotic forces aware of the fatal danger facing the country to make a decision that consisted in putting a stop to the destructive tendency and declare a state of emergency.

Regarding the development of the situation since the installation of the HSC, we can say the following: The HSC had endeavored since its creation to achieve two things: First, the recovery of state authority and the creation of appropriate conditions for the return to a democratic path.

Regrettably, in its search to have dialogue with the various social and political forces, it came across obstacles set up by some political parties out of politicking far away from the higher interests of the country.

Despite all this, all the important social forces that represented millions of citizens took part in the national dialogue march that was crowned with a platform which clearly determined the rules of transition to a true political democracy.

The stretched-hand policy of all the Algerians who were attached to the constitutional system and respected the fundamental national values was interpreted as an indication of weakness by forces that have always endeavored to impose by force and terror on the Algerians a suspicious and fictitious system that can only lead to the destruction of the country. We all know what happened in the countries in which similar systems were imposed: Comprehensive regression in all fields, civil wars, flight of the elite, division, explosion, etc.

In our country, these forces perpetrate on a daily basis under the cover of our noble religion, which they interpret as they like, destructive, barbaric, savage terrorist acts.

How can one justify in the name of Islam the killing of innocent men and women of all ages, children, young people, and mothers, the killing of those who are in the service of the state, which is one of the major gains of the Algerian revolution that enabled Algeria to resist colonialism, the killing of veterans and the sons of the martyrs who are one of the major symbols of the recovery of national sovereignty, the assassination of foreign nationals who came to Algeria to help it in its development, the assassination of genius, intellectuals, men of science and culture, and even religious men and ulemas.

How can one use Islam to justify the destruction, sabotage, and burning of establishments, and public as well economic institutions that represent a national heritage, and which belong to all Algerians?

How can one use Islam to violate the sanctity of places of worship? How can one use religion to justify acts of assault and robbery against financial premises; and robbing citizens of their possessions? What is more serious than this, is to launch an attack against the honor and dignity of citizens, as whole families have become targets of vile deeds whose victims are women and girls.

How can one describe such barbaric acts as relating to Islam or what is called the jihad, considering that they are acts committed by an extremist, barbaric, and ignorant gang, who have been joined by offenders; criminals, thieves, drug addicts, and a number of youngsters who belong to families known for their dishonorable behavior during the revolution of liberation?

Unfortunately, there are some youngsters, among these gangs, who have been fooled by false propaganda and have agreed to deal in crime. This has caused great regret for their families and parents.

These crimes, which are committed in the name of Islam, are in fact crimes against Islam itself. It is true that a large number of people, among them people close to us, have expressed their sympathy with this tendency and have expressed their support for it. They believed its promises and held high hopes that it could usher in a better future. However, the sad course of events presented them with a chance to realize that these promises were actually deceitful, as their hope for a better life was turned into a horrible nightmare. The majority of them turned against this behavior whose perpetrators managed to learn from the Khmer Rouge, who were known for the destruction of their country and the annihilation of their peoples.

The majority of Algerians know what would have happened to Algeria had the election process not been stopped at the appropriate time. The leadership of this movement was also on the verge of experiencing an internal explosion under pressure from the armed groups whose hard core was hit abroad when working for the benefit of foreign causes, which would have led the country to destruction, similarly to what is happening right now in some of the regions of the Islamic world.

Regarding the political side of the crisis, the head of state had defined more than once the framework within which dialogue should take place with the social and political partners who abided by the fundamental national values that had led our revolution and also the constitutional system.

Today, our fundamental and priority task consists in the rapid consolidation of state authority and public order, as well as guaranteeing the citizens' security and properties. In the eyes of the state, this is not just a sacred demand, but also a fundamental popular demand.

This is what made us understand that our people had become a chosen target for terrorist acts. It insists on public authority to eliminate this plague. We will take this task in charge.

The means mobilized so far to combat terrorism have fallen short of the seriousness of the situation. We are also determined to further mobilize the human and material resources of the country. We are also determined to use a radical remedy to eliminate for good this plague affecting Algerian society.

In addition to the enormous means that the state started mobilizing, the citizens are also called upon to take part in an effective way in this fateful battle, within the framework defined by the public authority.

Our people are now aware of the danger facing their future. We have no doubts that they will wage the battle against savagery and barbarism. We are fully convinced that the Algerian people and its state will come out victorious after this test, as the people had always proven during its long history.

We will be victorious because we are determined that Algeria will recover its respectable position among nations, which it should not have lost in the first place, and that it Algeria returns to the path of its cultural, economic, and social development. We have every chance of success, and we will succeed with God's help. Peace be upon you.

'Few Hundred People' Said in Armed Opposition Groups

LD2403091894 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The questions put to the interior minister Selim Saadi by the journalists present at the news conference in Blida on 23 March focused essentially on the general political and security situation in the country and the noticeable escalation of armed violence against people and property. In his replies to these questions, the interior minister talked about the phenomenon of violence and sabotage and said that 90 percent of these acts have now become criminal acts, and that those behind them want things to stay as they were. He mentioned in this respect the threats sent to the inland revenue authorities.

Regarding the number of individuals in the armed groups, Selim Saadi said that the hardcore of these groups consists of a few hundred people and that 95 percent of their members are known to the security services. He added that the others are carrying out operations under threats—as was established by the investigation into the arson attack against the Electronic Industries complex in Telagh. This investigation led in fact to the arrest of about 60 people, including a number of workers from the plant.

In reply to a question on the release of some detainees from security centers in the south, the interior minister said that those people were not implicated in serious security cases. He added that Abdelkader Boukhamkham and Ali Djeddi [members of the Islamic Salvation Front] were only released after they had served most of their jail sentences.

Concerning the political aspect of the crisis, Selim Saadi said that President Liamine Zeroual has defined on several occasions the framework in which the dialogue must be held, with the political and social partners who respect the national values and the constitutional system.

UGTA Says 87 Percent Participation in Protest Strikes

LD2203205894 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Excerpts] Throughout the country, workers have responded to the strike called by the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA] in protest against the burning down of enterprises and the killing of decent citizens. [passage omitted]

Airport workers also responded to the call. Thus, all domestic and international flights were suspended. Commercial activity was paralyzed at the port of Algiers after workers there stopped working for several hours. [passage omitted]

According to the UGTA, the rate of participation in the nationwide strike is estimated at 87 percent.

March 22 will remain an anniversary for the condemnation of acts of violence, a symbol of refusal and a rejection of disagreements between the children of this wounded homeland.

Two Frenchmen Murdered; Group Comments

PM2403103494 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Mar 94 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Algerian President Meets With Leaderships; 'Group' Claims Responsibility for Frenchmen's Murder"]

[Excerpts] Algiers, Paris, Washington, Jeddah, AL-HAYAH—On 23 March President Major General Liamine Zeroual held meetings with influential political and partisan figures in the framework of completing the "serious dialogue" he promised to conduct when he assumed power on 31 January. [passage omitted]

Hours after the murder of two Frenchmen in the Birkhadem area, south of the capital, France yesterday renewed its call to its nationals who do not need to stay in Algeria to return to France. [passage omitted]

The Algerian "Armed Islamic Group" has claimed responsibility for the two Frenchmen's murder in the Birkhadem area near the capital on 22 March. A statement issued by the group, copies of which AL-HAYAH has received in Peshawar by fax from abroad, says: "The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria claims responsibility for the murder of two French crusaders [salibiyyayn]." The statement adds: "This operation falls within the program drawn up by the group to eliminate any presence of Jews and Christians in the land of Islam in Algeria." In its statement the group said that the presence of the Jews, Christians, and polytheists in the land of Islam is a direct support for an infidel and illegitimate government which should be eliminated by the blade of the sword. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Musa Comments on Israel, Peace Process, Other Issues

NC2303152294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1430 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 23 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has affirmed that Israel should return the occupied Arab land in return for a just, lasting peace. Israel should also acknowledge the legitimate Palestinian rights and abide by the UN Security Council Resolution 242 based on the principles of land for peace and justice for peace, Musa added.

Musa said the return of the Arab land, the solution of regional problems, and the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza would produce a new situation with Israel.

In a statement delivered before the Consultative Council's session led by Dr. Mustafa Kamal Hilmi today, Musa stressed the need to implement all the provisions of Resolution 242 for the sake of reaching a peaceful settlement based on the land-for-peace principle. This would also mean land and justice in return for peace, he added.

Musa pointed out that when this happens, we will discuss the economic situation, such as the Middle East market or economic cooperation. He said that Israel's place in this market depends upon the return of the Arabs' legitimate rights.

In his statement, the foreign minister said there can be no Arab solidarity without Egypt. He added: We always consult with the Arab brothers when we adopt any political stance. Musa noted: We always propose policies but we impose policies on no one. We must hold consultations before adopting any fateful decision, stressing that Egypt's role is known and valued.

The foreign minister said he will raise the issue of pan-Arab security at the Arab League ministerial council meeting on Saturday. He said Arab positions still diverge and there are serious threats from inside and outside the Arab world. He pointed out that Egypt is trying to ensure comprehensive pan-Arab security.

In his statement to the Consultative Council, the foreign minister said that the concept of pan-Arab security needs redrafting to be in line with the projected international changes. He said the concept of pan-Arab security must be broader than simply a bloc against any external aggression. He noted that the overall view of this issue must be wider and comprehensive.

'Amr Musa stressed that solidarity, cooperation, and accord represent the pillars of this security. It can never be established on enmity, Musa added. He highlighted President Mubarak's efforts to contain Libya's crisis with the West and end the events in Yemen and Somalia.

Commenting on the obstacles facing the creation of pan-Arab security, Musa said the biggest obstacle lies within the Arab system. He noted that foreign forces are impeding the return of Arab solidarity. He said that only Arab strength can overcome such obstacles.

Musa affirmed that Egypt does not accept the separation of north Sudan from the south. We can never accept that; this is a clear pan-Arab stance, he said.

Touching on relations with Iraq, Musa said: We differed with Iraq because of its violation of international, regional, and Arab rules and its aggression against Kuwait. The situation can only be rectified by returning to basics. Iraq must accept Kuwait's independence and respect its sovereignty instead of viewing it as the 19th governorate.

Musa pointed out that Iraq's conduct distorted the collective Arab system and created an Arab and international problem, from which we are still suffering. We must agree upon a cure on a clear-cut basis. The starting point should be Iraq's acceptance of Kuwait's independence and sovereignty and implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, he stressed.

Proceeding to relations with Iran, Minister Musa affirmed that Iran is a fraternal non-Arab state the policy of which we disagree with on particular details. Iran is a Middle Eastern state that has borders with Arab countries. Discussing the regional situation requires talking to Iran as much as it requires talking with Egypt. But it is not part of Arab security or the Arab situation.

Touching on the Turkish position, the foreign minister pointed out that Turkey's position is different from Iran's, because ties with Turkey are good. The Turkish policy and conduct are linked with its cooperation, friendship, and relations with the Arab world, he said, adding: We cannot place Turkey on the same footing with other states that have problems with the Arab world.

The foreign minister reiterated that the Arab League's role can't be ignored or excluded, even if we find fault with its conduct. The Arab League is a mirror reflecting the Arab situation, he remarked, and its role is to discuss the actual situation. We officially asked the League to discuss the issue of pan-Arab security and an important study has been prepared in this connection, he said.

Departs for Ethiopia

NC2303192494 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo for Addis Ababa this evening to chair the meetings of the Central Apparatus for Solving African Disputes by Peaceful Means, which begin in the Ethiopian capital tomorrow. The apparatus is scheduled to discuss attempts to resolve existing African disputes, including the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria, and the situations in Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia. It will also discuss the apparatus' budget deficit. The foreign ministers of apparatus member states are participating in the meetings.

In a statement before leaving, Musa expressed his extreme annoyance over the situation in Hebron and the violent treatment of its Palestinian residents, which is resulting in casualties. He said: Egypt denounces these actions and calls on the Israeli Government to adopt the necessary measures to protect the Palestinian people according to the recent UN Security Council resolution.

Yeltsin Emissary Arrives From Tunis for 3-Day Visit

NC2303061994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2235 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—Victor Pasuvalyuk, special envoy of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, arrived in Cairo tonight from Tunis on a three-day visit to Egypt during which he will hold talks with Egyptian officials on the Middle East peace process.

In an arrival statement, Pasuvalyuk said that he wishes to keep Egyptian officials fully briefed on the peace talks, as Egypt is a major partner in the peace process. He added that Russia and all those concerned with the peace process appreciate Egypt's contribution to the peace efforts.

The Russian official said that he conveyed to Yasir 'Arafat a message from Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev in which he states Russia's eagerness to play an effective part in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 904 and reiterates Russia's desire to see the negotiations restarted. He added: I discussed with 'Arafat arrangements and practical measures that could help restore the situation to normal following the Hebron massacre, which we strongly condemn.

Wafd Party Leader Criticizes Clinton Remarks on Jerusalem

NC2303160294 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Text] Wafd Party Leader Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din has issued the following statement: Even before the blood of martyrs drawn by the bullets of Israel's monster in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque had dried up, the world was surprised by a statement attributed to the U.S. President that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel. The statement was a shock to human feelings and to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It was also a flagrant violation of the international agreements on maintaining the legal status of Jerusalem and ran counter to U.S. policy itself, which meticulously refrained from recognizing the city as the capital of the Israeli state.

President Clinton's surprise behavior is an indication of the indecision of the U.S. Administration, which on the one hand speaks about peace and on the other pours fuel on the fire, thus inflaming the feelings of Arabs and Muslims who no longer believe in the usefulness of the new world order headed by the United States.

The surprise U.S. decision has swept away all the dreams for peace and stability in the Middle East. Its dire consequences will appear sooner or later because insulting Arab ideals and feelings cannot go unpunished. The Arab people are capable of regaining their dignity even if they are disappointed by their governments, who have adopted an impotent stance on the U.S. decision.

Condemning this unjust decision, the Wafd Party calls on all national parties, organizations, and forces to stand together against this impending danger threatening the Arab nation. The U.S. Administration must know that the voice of the people is stronger than it thinks.

Al-Azhar Grand Imam Comments

NC2303154094 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Sana' al-Sa'id]

[Text] Al-Azhar Grand Imam Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq has denounced a recent statement by U.S. President Bill Clinton that Jerusalem is Israel's unified capital and not part of the occupied Arab territories. The shaykh expressed surprise and astonishment at the statement, which coincides with efforts to resume negotiations on the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq said: If the American President really made the statement attributed to him, then this shows that the American position is not steady. Such statements harm current efforts to resume talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis and talks between Israel and the other Arab cordon states, namely, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

The al-Azhar shaykh called on officials to take a position if the U.S. President is proved to have made such a statement.

Libya

Country Agrees to Trial for Lockerbie Suspects

NC2303142294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0930 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Paris, 23 Mar (MENA)—Libya has announced that it agrees to hand over two of its citizens suspected in the Lockerbie downing for trial at the International Court of Justice in The Hague with the participation of judges from Scotland.

This was announced by Sa'd Mujbir, secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the General People's Congress in Libya, in a speech he delivered at the meeting of the International Parliamentary Union currently being held in Paris.

Sa'd Mujbir said that "to you and through you, we declare to the whole world that we officially accept the proposal by Mr. Black, professor of law in Scotland, for the Libyans to be tried before the International Court of Justice in The Hague with the participation of judges from Scotland".

It is worth noting that Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, has previously agreed for the two Libyans to be tried at the International Court of Justice without mentioning Scottish participation, but this was rejected every time by the United States and Britain.

Official: Suspects Willing To Stand Trial

LD2303192394 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Let's turn to Libya's dispute with the West. The two suspects in the Lockerbie attack against a Panam plane in 1988 are reported to have agreed to go to The Hague to appear before the International Court of Justice on condition that Scottish judges are present. An official of the Libyan parliament, Sa'd Mijbir, who is visiting Paris, confirms this information to Adala Benraad:

[Begin Mijbir recording] A Scottish professor has proposed that the two suspects go to The Hague to be tried in the presence of Scottish magistrates. We have been informed by the lawyers of the two suspects that their clients have agreed and that they will go to The Hague of their own free will. We have accepted this proposal and we hope that the United States and the UK will accept too because this proposal paves the way to a peaceful, fair, and legal solution. [end recording]

Palestinian Opposition Visits, To Meet al-Qadhdhafi

TA2303161094 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 8

[Text] Damascus, QUDS PRESS—An informed Palestinian source in the opposition Palestinian forces alliance has said that a delegation made up of leaders of the opposition factions arrived this week on an official visit to Tripoli. The visit is the first of its kind to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, the source said that the visit, which falls within framework of the political moves by the opposition Palestinian forces to mobilize support for their positions that are opposed to continuing the talks with Israel, is aimed at discussing political developments in the region and the Libyan stance toward the current peace process. Libya opposes the self-rule accord reached by Israel and the PLO at the end of last year.

All leaders of the opposition Palestinian factions, with the exception of Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, are participating with the Palestinian delegation, which is expected to meet with Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

The source said that Jibril, who resides in Damascus, did not accompany the delegation for security reasons. He added that the visit was made upon an invitation from the Libyan leadership.

The Palestinian forces opposed to the Declaration of Principles are seeking to mobilize a hardline Arab stance against this accord. For this purpose, they have established an alliance which they have called "the Alliance of the 10 Palestinian Forces," whose headquarters is in Damascus.

Sudan

Al-Bashir—Rebels Manipulated by Foreigners

EA2303193594 Omdurman Sudan Television Network in English 1600 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] President of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Hamad al-Bashir, said today that the rejection of the Garang faction to form an agreement reached during talks, assures that the movement is just a front manipulated by foreign elements to serve their ends. He referred to the Israeli arms shipment to the rebels which was recently discovered, which confirms the imperialist double-dealing played by America to delegate one of its allies to play its role. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir told the media and press leaderships at his weekly press briefing session this afternoon, that the rebel movement had lost its credibility as a so-called national movement, as it had become a tool for foreign powers. He put foreign interference as the major obstacle to peace in Sudan. He affirmed that Sudan is still committed to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] initiative.

He also praised the accord among the Somali factions [as heard], expressing Sudan's continued appeals to solve the problem by Somalis, condemning foreign intervention, which had escalated the conflict.

Although the Sudanese National Salvation Revolution elements are clean and honest, yet the attorney general had directed immediate action to be taken on any corruption complaint. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir warned the rumormongers of the negative impacts of their foul deeds.

Minister Hails 'Reorganization' of Ties With U.S.

PM2303121194 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Ahmad 'Uthman Jibril and Hasan Sandarusa: "Khartoum 'Convinced' United States Not Seeking To Topple al-Bashir Regime"]

[Excerpt] Khartoum, Washington—The Sudanese Government has welcomed "the reorganization of relations" with the United States, announcing that it is convinced Washington "is not seeking to topple" the government of President 'Umar al-Bashir.

Foreign Minister Dr. Husayn Abu-Salih yesterday revealed that Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, will visit Sudan 31 March carrying a message from President Bill Clinton to President 'Umar al-Bashir related to the war in southern Sudan, human rights, the Sudanese peace negotiations, and the issue of democracy. At a news conference held yesterday Abu-Salih said that Albright's visit "will open the door to a Sudanese-U.S. dialogue." He added that "the United States has stressed to us that it is seeking to play a direct role in the peace process in southern Sudan."

He added that his country "is now convinced that the United States is not working to topple the government or obstruct the peace steps." He pointed out that "there are differing views, and the dialogue can bring the views closer." He expressed his hope that the visit "will be positive and bring ideas for the reorganization of Sudanese-U.S. relations with a view to achieving peace."

AL-HAYAH has learned from Khartoum sources that Albright's visit to Sudan will last two hours. Sudan welcomed the U.S. State Department's statement in which the United States praised the IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] initiative and welcomed IGADD states' commitment to finding a peaceful settlement to the problem in southern Sudan, urging the two conflicting parties "to seize this opportunity to achieve a settlement."

Abu-Salih described the U.S. statement as "positive." He said that his country "welcomes any support for peace." He stressed that "a cease-fire should lead to peace and more stability, not preparation for further wars and military operations."

Asked by AL-HAYAH about the diplomatic measures his ministry is going to take against the Ugandan Government after the revelation that Uganda participated in the delivery of weapons to the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, Abu-Salih declined to specify these measures. He said his government "knows the details of this operation, who purchased the weapons, and who delivered them to the rebels." He added: "Despite what Uganda did to Sudan, Sudan consents to Uganda's participation in the IGADD negotiations being held in Nairobi."

On Sudan's refusal to include the Hala'ib issue on the agenda of the Arab foreign ministers meeting scheduled for Cairo 26 March, Abu-Salih said: "I hope that this will prompt the achievement of a strategic relationship in the interests of the Sudanese and Egyptian peoples and the Arab nation." He added that his country "has decided not to fall into a dispute over minor matters with the Egyptian Government." He pointed out, however, that rising above "minor matters" does not mean "that we abandon Hala'ib." He said that Khartoum will raise with the Arab League the issue of the war in southern Sudan "in order to take the right stand and secure an equation that enables the people of Sudan to live in peace." He stressed that his government "cannot negotiate on the issue of self-determination" for the south, which he described as "a malicious attept to drag the country into further infighting and fragmentation." [passage omitted]

Accord on 'Corridors of Tranquility'

EA2303193194 Nairobi Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 1600 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] All the warring factions in Sudan today in Nairobi signed an agreement for safe passage of relief supplies and humanitarian assistance to civilians in the war affected areas. The representatives, who met under the chairmanship of Kenya's Foreign Minister, Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, who is also the chairman of the IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] foreign affairs standing committee overseeing the Sudanese problem, agreed that the humanitarian and political dimensions of the Sudanese problem be treated separately but simultaneously.

The Sudanese Government delegation was led by Mr. Muhammad Khalifah, Commander Salva [Kiir] mayar dit for SPLM/SPLA, while SPLM [Sudanese People's Liberation Movement]/SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army]-United was represented by Dr. Richard Mola.

Mr. Musyoka also said that the parties had also agreed to declare corridors of tranquillity to be set by the UN and the concerned parties from 15th to 30th April, May and June this year [as heard] to allow for vaccinations of Sudanese children under five years. The parties also said that the decision was necessary to alleviate unnecessary hunger and restore basic social services. They, however, maintained that humanitarian activities should be transparent and should never be channelled to warring parties.

The occasion was also witnessed by all IGADD foreign affairs ministers.

Sudanese Factions Sign Peace Agenda Document

EA2303185594 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1430 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Nairobi, 23 March (SUNA)—The government delegation and the two rebel factions participating in the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] committee's negotiations on the Sudanese dispute have signed a document concerning their agenda.

Mr. Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, the speaker for the Transitional National Assembly and the leader of the government delegation, signed on behalf of the government; Salva Kiir [mayar dit] signed on behalf of the main faction—Garang's Group; and Richard (Mola) signed on behalf of the unified group in the presence of the foreign ministers of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea and a representative of the Ugandan foreign minister.

A report by SUNA from Nairobi said the agenda of the negotiations comprised the opening guidelines as read out by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi in the first procedural session of the talks. It also comprised the principles that constitute the basis for solving the dispute in Sudan. The agenda also contained transitional procedures and steps to be taken to apply the principles agreed upon for solving the dispute in the south.

Sudanese Factions Sign Agreement, Adjourn Until 16 May

EA2303151094 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] It was announced in Nairobi today that the peace negotiations between the government and the two rebel factions under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] states had been adjourned until 16 May. Our reporter in Nairobi informed us that the meeting between the negotiating parties and the council of the IGADD states continued last night and ended this morning. The participants agreed to form a higher committee to discuss the provision of relief to the war afflicted. Our reporter added that agreement was also reached on the general principles to form a basis for solving the southern issue and establishing a mechanism for implementing these principles.

Ummah Party Statement on Nairobi Peace Talks Cited

LD2303151194 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Ummah Party Attacks Islamic Front, Expects Sudanese Negotiations to Fail"]

[Text] London, AL-HAYAH—The Ummah Party has vehemently criticized the Sudanese Government, attacking "untruthful statement" made by the "Islamic Front government's" delegation to the Sudanese peace talks in Nairobi.

Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi, official in charge of the Ummah Party's external action, criticized the delegation's statements that he is in Nairobi for the sake of "sabotage and distortion" with a view to thwarting the negotiations sponsored by IGADD [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development] members. He expects the negotiations to fail.

In a statement, a copy of which AL-HAYAH has received, Mubarak al-Mahdi stressed that contacts are continuing between the party and "our brothers in southern Sudan, first and foremost Colonel John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM]. He also said: "We have always worked and called for stopping the devastating war in south and east Sudan and for stopping the massacres and ugly human rights violations committed in the name of the jihad by the Khartoum government throughout Sudan (...), and the government must stop the ongoing fighting immediately, instead of shedding crocodile tears over peace." He added: "We are not exploiting this dirty war in our struggle to topple the government of the Islamic Front and restore democracy in Sudan, because its fuel is our people on both sides and its victims are women and children (...). We are capable of settling our battle with the regime in Khartoum, as we have besieged it politically and socially. It is now besieged by failure and corruption."

He accused the government and "its party, the Islamic Front party" of aborting the "peace plan achieved by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's government in 1989," and of choosing the military solution and making millions homeless. He said that the government "has not achieved any significant victory," pointing out that the "SPLM still controls 90 percent of the southern territory. And the Islamic Front has reaped nothing except the demand for self-determination, which it planted and fed by its alliance with Lam Akol and its agreements with the al-Nasir group in Frankfurt and the Netherlands." He said that the Front decided to participate in the peace negotiations after "its summer military campaign failed." And it alone is responsible for the death of thousands of victims and for the soldiers, officers, and Popular Defense troops scattered in the southern territory, west of the Nile, and who are dying of starvation."

He expects the Nairobi negotiations to fail, "because the National [Islamic] Front is offering Garang and southerners peace in return for symbolic participation in a dictatorial, tyrannical regime that is isolated and condemned internationally for committing the ugliest of human rights violations." He wondered: "What benefit will southerners gain from that?"

Yemen

Salih Addresses Ma'rib Conference on Unity, Democracy

JN2303191294 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Presidential Council Chairman Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has met with the brothers members of the expanded conference of the Ma'rib Governorate masses. This brought together shaykhs, notables, social figures, clergymen, merchants, and representatives of parties, political organizations, and popular associations [words indistinct].

The brother Presidential Council chairman spoke to them. He welcomed them and exchanged with them congratulations on the advent of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr. He expressed his immense appreciation of the militant positions and the high national sense of responsibility demonstrated by the Ma'rib Governorate residents. He also appreciated their keenness to stick to national constants, foremost among which are the revolution, unity, and democracy. He also praised the militant roles played by the Ma'rib Governorate population in defense of the march of the revolution and the Republic.

The brother Presidential Council chairman added: Ma'rib is the epitome of history, civilization, loyalty, and glories. I have always been with you in all circumstances and conditions. I have listened to your grievances. I am aware of the sufferings caused for the Ma'rib Governorate, particularly since it was isolated and deprived of its right to development. Since 1981, the governorate has seen a tangible development effort. Much has been done in Ma'rib, thanks to the cooperation of its population. We have great hopes that we will be able to implement further service and development projects to promote the quality of life in Ma'rib.

During his meeting with the population of the Ma'rib Governorate, the brother Presidential Council chairman reviewed current national developments, the background and implications of the current political crisis, the factors affecting its course, and its impact on the country and national unity, as well as the harm it has caused the homeland and citizens, who are currently overburdened by the continued crisis, which should not have reached this state of affairs in the first place.

The brother Presidential Council chairman noted that our people regained their unity on 22 May 1990, when the Yemeni community was reunified, [words indistinct] potentials and capabilities so that the development endeavor may be promoted, and so the homeland may see progress. He said efforts have continued to be made to cope with the current crisis. He stressed the need for Constitutional institutions to convene their meetings so together they may shoulder their responsibilities toward the implementation of the accord document, and in order to promote trust and safeguard the march of unity and democracy in our country.

The brother Presidential Council chairman asserted that there is no way for the separatist past to be recreated, and that there is no going back on unity, regardless of the price entailed, because unity is the ideal of all Yemenis' pride and dignity. It is the present and future of the homeland.

The brother president warned against all forms of division within the society. He added: We must confront all feeble souls who cause differences, conflicts, and parochial disputes, be they regional, sectarian, tribal, or otherwise. For our people are an Arab and Muslim people. They have a common creed, common principles, and common objectives. They strongly adhere to their Islamic creed and their national constants. We must unify our ranks, and positions. Our top priority must be to spare our homeland sedition and conflicts, and to promote its quest for construction, development, unity, and democracy so that it may reach safe shores.

The brother president commended the decisions and recommendations made by the expanded conference of the Ma'rib Governorate masses. He blessed these decisions, which reflected a high sense of national responsibility aimed at sparing the homeland division and rifts and safeguarding its unity. Besides, these decisions reflected the patriotic sentiments and truthful intent of the Ma'rib Governorate, which are best seen in hard circumstances and critical junctures in the homeland's history. He reiterated that democracy will continue to safeguard and fortify unity, and that differences, regardless of how serious they are, must be resolved through peaceful and democratic dialogue. He indicated that the Yemenis have embraced democracy, and that they must shoulder the consequences of democracy, regardless of what they may be. For democracy and pluralism have caused us to acknowledge and accept the peaceful exchange of authority. It is we who announced that the Yemeni president must not be allowed to rule for more than two presidential terms in office so that a new leadership may be allowed to take over, and to expand the base of power-sharing. The homeland provides ample room for all. Besides, it is the property of all Yemenis, the brother president said.

The brother president added: The past, which is marked by separation, provides us with an abundance of lessons, from which we must learn. We must do everything that can serve our homeland and promote its higher interests. We must spare no effort to build the homeland and achieve renaissance and development in it. We will do our best to achieve this, in cooperation with all well-meaning parties in the homeland. [passage omitted]

Egyptian Envoy Arrives in Sanaa, Makes Statement

JN2303211194 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Brother Badr Hammam, envoy of President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and assistant to the Egyptian foreign minister, arrived in Sanaa today on a working visit to our country. He will meet with brothers in the political leadership, as well as senior state officials.

In a statement to the Yemeni News Agency, SABA', the Egyptian official expressed his happiness to visit his second homeland, Yemen, pointing out that the visit is part of the strong brotherly relations between the two fraternal Yemeni and Egyptian peoples. He also stressed the eagerness of the Egyptian leadership and people to support their Yemeni brothers at all times and under all circumstances and to share with them what is happening on their land as brothers, who wish to see Yemen stable and prosperous.

He then voiced his strong confidence that the political leadership, as well as all forces within and outside the coalition, are more than eager to achieve security and stability and to preserve Yemen's unity. He stressed that Yemen would move ahead on the path of unity, democracy, and construction, wishing the Yemeni people more development and prosperity under the young Yemeni republic.

He was received at the airport by Ahmad Dayfallah al-'Uzayb, Foreign Ministry under secretary for political affairs; several Foreign Ministry officials; a delegate from the Presidential Protocol; and Egyptian Charge d'affaires in Sanaa 'Adil Subhi.

Cabinet Forms Committees To Implement Accord Document

JN2303184594 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] The Council of Ministers held a meeting in the economic and commercial capital, Aden, this morning under the chairmanship of Prime Minister brother Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas. The council discussed issues pertaining to the implementation of the pledge and accord document in order to build a modern Yemeni state.

The council then formed several committees for that purpose. A committee was formed under the chairmanship of the prime minister with the membership of the deputy prime ministers. The committee will propose ways of setting up committees to prepare for the Constitutional amendments, the local government law, the administrative division law, and the elections law.

Another committee was formed under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Haydarah Masdus and the membership of Interior Minister Yahya al-Mutawakkil, Defense Minister Haytham Qasim Tahir, and 'Abd-al-Salam Karman, minister of state for Legal and House of Representatives Affairs. The committee will prepare draft laws as stipulated in the first part of the accord document regarding the arrest of defendants, consolidating the military and security situation, (?assessing) the relationship, and defining the powers.

A third committee was formed under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Unsi and the membership of Justice Minister 'Abdallah Ahmad Ghanim and Electricity and Water Resources Minister Ahmad 'Ali al-Salami, in addition to two members of the Dialogue Committee. The committee will prepare proposals regarding the Political Forces Dialogue Committee as a body supervising and following the implementation of the pledge and accord document.

It has been decided that these committees will prepare proposals to be presented to an upcoming meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Diplomat's Salary Not Paid for 'Administrative Reasons'

JN2103162994 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Mar 94

[Text] A Northern Yemeni source in Sanaa has announced that the salary of 'Abdallah Nasir, Yemeni charge d'affaires in Beirut, has not been paid for administrative reasons, not because he is originally from the south. The announcement came in response to a statement by the spokesman of the Yemeni Embassy in Beirut in which it was said that since the beginning of February the central government in Sanaa had stopped paying salaries to the Yemeni diplomats abroad who are originally from the southern governorates. The spokesman noted that this is a step toward division by influential parties in Sanaa.

IRAQ

Kurds Expect Attack 'Within 48 Hours'

PM2403104094 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Kurds Expect Iraqi Attack 'Within 48 Hours'"]

[Text] London—Kurdish sources have told AL-HAYAH that they do not rule out an imminent attack by Baghdad on Kurdistan, "maybe within the coming 48 hours."

Meanwhile, the Kurdish administration has told Western states that Iraqi military deployments on the front lines with the Kurds have assumed a serious form—which points to aggressive intentions.

The sources expressed their hope that the coalition states would officially warn Baghdad against any aggressive actions against Kurdish areas, whose inhabitants now feel the danger and are worried. The sources pointed out that the Iraqis have deployed two Republican Guard divisions on the front lines in Chamchamal and Karkuk. They said that Kurdish forces are watching the Iraqi movements and expect any potential strikes to focus on areas situated south of Parallel 36.

Villages Shelled, Tanks Deployed

NC2403111694 Paris AFP in English 1044 GMT 24 March 94

[Text] Al-Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, March 24 (AFP)—The Iraqi Army has shelled villages and deployed 60 tanks near Kurdish lines in northeastern Iraq, Kurdish military officials said Thursday [24 March].

The shelling late Wednesday close to the Kurdish checkpoint of Chamchamal on the road from the government-controlled town of Karkuk to Kurdish-held al-Sulaymaniyah caused no casualties, they said.

Kurdish district commander Khidir Sine said 6O tanks had been brought forward to the line since Tuesday, while an Iraqi helicopter flew within 300 metres (yards) of the demarcation line.

Iraqi forces are now less than 500 metres (yards) from the checkpoint.

A 300-kilometre (180-mile) stretch of the demarcation line between Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq and the rest of the country lies south of the 36th parallel, above which the Kurds are protected by allied warplanes.

Iraq has since the start of March built up troops and arms on the other side of the line, according to the Kurds.

But a senior officer who deserted from the Iraqi Army, declining to be named, said the soldiers along the demarcation line were "not in a fit state to attack the Kurds."

Their morale is low and the army's situation "desolate," according to the officer.

While ruling out a large-scale attack, Kurdish officials and representatives of foreign organisations said the army could launch limited raids south of the 36th parallel.

Defense Minister Attends Engineering Conference 23 Mar

JN2303183294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Mar (INA)—The second two-day engineering conference of the Military Engineering Academy convened today under the motto "Nothing Can Prevent Us from Achieving Scientific Advancement."

The conference, which was attended by Defense Minister Staff General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid and several other ministers, began with a Koranic recitation. Then, the opening chapter of the Koran was read to invoke God's mercy on the souls of those who are nobler than all of us, the martyrs of Iraq and the glorious Arab nation.

The conferees will discuss ways of mobilizing Iraqi scientific expertise to break the embargo, and endorse reasonable criteria for the assessment of scientific research. They will also debate 89 research papers in various areas and engineering specialties.

The conference is attended by 96 researchers, 95 associate professors, and 25 university professors working at all Iraqi military and civilian universities, as well as specialized agencies and research institutes and centers affiliated with the Military Industrialization Organization, the National Construction Center, the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Irrigation, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

'Dramatic' Deterioration Seen in Security Situation

PM2303152694 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Opposition Confirms Deterioration of Security Situation in Baghdad"]

[Text] London, AL-HAYAH—The "Iraqi Dispatch Committee" belonging to the Unified Iraqi National Congress in Salah al-Din (Iraqi Kurdistan) has said that the security situation in Baghdad has deteriorated "dramatically."

A report from the committee, a copy of which AL-HAYAH has received, says that Iraqi authorities have confirmed this deterioration. The government-controlled newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH published on 19 March a statement issued by the Interior Ministry, saying that death sentences had been passed against four people—three are in prison and the fourth is at large—for stealing a car and involvement in an armed clash with the traffic police in Baghdad. The ministry announced a reward of 1 million dinars ($3,152) for the fugitive's arrest.

The Dispatch Committee listed in its report several incidents which occurred in Baghdad during February and March: the theft of a car belonging to the British relief organization Oxfam (11 March), an explosion near the Air Force Command premises (13 March), another explosion near a statue of President Saddam Husayn in al-Zawra' park (2 March), a bomb explosion in Tunis Street (27 February), and a clash which occurred at night in 14 Ramadan Street between an armed group and a police patrol. This clash resulted in the killing of an officer and a policeman (28 February).

Group Expresses Fear of 'Environmental Disaster'

JN2303210894 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Paris, 23 Mar (INA)—Iraq has warned it may be hit by an environmental disaster from the continuing sanctions.

A memorandum submitted by the Iraqi parliamentary delegation to the 91st congress of the International Parliamentary Union, now in session in Paris, notes a rising level of pollution and the emergence of symptoms of previously unknown diseases. The Iraqi paper also notes an increased incidence of illnesses among women and children, including a higher-than-usual number of miscarriages and babies born with deformities.

The memorandumm stresses that extensive use of depleted uranium in the missiles fired during the aggression on Iraq may bring about an environmental disaster, whose effects will be felt for many years to come. This is in addition to environmental pollution from crude oil and oil-based products.

The memorandum blames the sanction-caused scarcity of finances and technical resources for the difficulties involved in destroying waste and maintaining a healthy environment.

The paper appeals to the parliamentarians to direct that living in a healthy environment falls under the human rights heading and that sanctions arising from political disputes should exclude substances required for the protection of the environment.

Iraq's delegation to the congress is led by National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih.

BABIL Assesses Performance of Foreign Ministry

JN2303180694 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic
21 Mar 94 p 1

[Untitled editorial]

[Text] In the past, when the government became angry and annoyed with a high-ranking official and wanted to get rid of him, it assigned him to the Foreign Ministry. When that person was a middle-ranking official, he was assigned to the Finance Ministry. When he was a low-ranking official, he was assigned to the Ministries of Youth and Agriculture. What was the result?

When we needed bread, we found our agriculture destroyed and without irrigation; no one could plant in order to feed the people. So, the head of state, comrade leader Saddam Husayn—as usual—was forced to save the situation. He supervised the harvest from the beginning. He gave instructions to set up irrigation projects and build dams under the circumstances of the blockade.

What also happened? When youths were needed to stand with honor during the chapter of treason, they were the tools of implementation. When our economy was in a critical situation because of the lack of hard currency and the lack of dollars as a financial cover, and when we needed good economists and finance men, we noticed the cause of all that confusion was the economists and finance men of the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Ministry. As a result of this, the dollar exchange rate increased continuously from 54 dinar until it reached more than 300 dinars.

Since the cease-fire—praise be to God, the Iraqis who sat at the negotiating table with the Americans to reach the cease-fire were not the politicians of the Foreign Ministry, but a military group who fought in al-Qadisiyah and the Mother of Battles—we can say the handling of Iraq's foreign policy has been deteriorating. Iraqis can say it is in a bad shape. Why? Is this the result of the current situation? The answer is no. Throughout the 8 years of the war with Iran and until the Mother of Battles our ambassadors worked in trade. One of our ambassadors to a Southeast Asian country had nothing to do except to trade in carpets, works of art, and electrical appliances in order to collect money. The main concern of other ambassadors in socialist countries was to profit from trade in the black market. Embassy employees who work in sensitive organizations and who are charged with security tasks work in trade. The other employees' primary concern is to live in free houses in the countries to which they are assigned and to obtain food at low prices in order to collect dollars to buy commodities for resale at high prices in Iraq. In one of the countries on which we depend until this moment, the ambassador has nothing to do but to take gifts from so-and-so merchant and to charge so-and-so merchant with running his own affairs. This takes place while their people are being besieged and need every honest effort to provide them with bread. The outcome is the escape of more than one ambassador who quit the service and did not return to the homeland of struggle or to their steadfast people.

If we assess the work of our foreign policy during the eight years of war—in which each Iraqi house lost one, two, or three martyrs—what will be our gains? Only part of the Jordanian people, three-quarters of the Yemeni people, and the very rich people in the Gulf were at our side? We now understand why the Gulf people's feeling were with us. Because we indirectly deterred Iran's danger to the nation. In other words, we averted the danger of fire so their money wouldn't catch fire and burn.

As a result, when we were engaged in the Mother of Battles, the Arabian Gulf states mobilized armies against us, directly or indirectly, and with their money. Part of Egypt, whose citizens were working in Iraq, stood by our side. The whole Arab Maghreb was against us because it believed Iraq had committed an aggression against a neighboring Muslim country.

Is the Arabs' love for Iraqis expressed by places that did not support us due to foreign policy?

The answer is no. It was due to Saddam Husayn who suits his actions to his words. This is what every Arab wants. He wants a leader who can talk in the name of the nation, who is one of the nation's best sons, and who raises the nation's banner against all symbols and idols that act against the nation and the liberation of Palestine and that led to the loss of Palestine. Those who travel outside Iraq feel the Arab people's love. The Arab citizen loves the Iraqis because he loves Saddam Husayn. Saddam is the key and Iraq is the door.

What have we won so far? Two people were playing cards. One of them revealed his cards to the other, placed all his money before him, and began to negotiate with him empty-handed. In other words, we surrendered to the United Nations. We agreed to everything. We did not keep any cards to negotiate with, including factories and weapons. We revealed all our diplomatic cards from the very first round. We agreed with them. But they were pursuing the Jewish mentality, namely, the take-and-demand formula. One of our comrades mentioned this point in a television interview. They asked just for one factory, then for just one piece of iron, them for just another piece, and then for just another item. We gave them everything. Now, we have nothing to negotiate with.

The United Nations understands only one language—the language of Aidid and the Yugoslavs. The Somalis are a poor nation, and their best weapon is the Kalashnikov. But what were the results? The invaders left, although their armies outnumbered the Somali inhabitants. Aidid represents one trend, and the number of his supporters was equal to that of Ali Mahdi. After he entered into a conflict with the foreigners, the number of his followers increased at the expense of the other trends. In Yugoslavia, whenever the Yugoslavs want something, they behave properly with the United Nations and succeed in choosing the right way.

The best thing that can be said about foreign policy is the dialogue between two generations of Ba'thists, the pioneers and the young generation. Among themselves, youths criticize foreign policy represented by the person of the foreign minister.

The pioneers literally say: My dear comrade, so and so should be lauded for being able to work. Comrade so and so is more than a foreign minister, and our ambassador so and so is more than a foreign minister, but so and so is just a foreign minister. [as published]

I would like to relate to you the following dialogue that took place between Stalin and Mao Tse-tung.

Mao Tse-tung: Comrade Stalin, how many members should we have in the Communist Party of China in order to achieve victory and reach power?

Stalin, thankfully: Ten members.

Mao Tse-tung, surprised: But the members of our party number millions, comrade.

Stalin: I mean 10 members like Muhammad's followers.

Country's Role in UNSC 'Rift' Over Embargo Examined

JN2303191894 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 1

[Untitled editorial]

[Text] The rift that has taken place among the major aggression states at the United Nations over the unfair embargo clamped on Iraq is evidence of Iraq's success in effecting changes in the positions of these states, whose warplanes dropped hundreds of tonnes of bombs and ammunition over the heads of the defenseless Iraqi people.

When several states, including big powers, such as the PRC, Russia, and France, three major powers that enjoy the veto right at the UN Security Council, change their positions, this means that Iraq's steadfastness has paid off, and that the gambles of the United States and Britain have failed, although they have chosen to oppose changes in the new international position by forcing their evil wishes on others. The United States and Britain have realized that continued enforcement of the embargo was merely an impasse that causes whoever chooses to stick to it to collapse in terms of political and international positions.

As the leader of the camp hostile to the national yearnings and ambitions of other peoples who are not about to let go of their independence, the United States is bound to forfeit further allies, even if these belong in the camp of the second- or third-rate powers that, in 1990 and 1991, rushed to support the U.S. aggression on and siege of Iraq. America's loss will then be compounded and the United States will not be in a position to lead the world. There will be a dwindling in its international standing, after it had been afforded the opportunity to gain exclusive control of the world by the former Soviet Union.

The world Zionist movement and the United States wanted their aggression on Iraq and the sanctions to create conditions that would make it impossible for any other power to take them on. Such a scenario has certainly failed to materialize, but the Zionists and the Americans continue to pursue that objective. The credit for the failure of that goal to come to fruition must go to the steadfastness of the Iraqi people and the brilliance of Saddam Husayn. The forces of aggression assumed that where the comprehensive 30-state aggression and the page of treachery and treasons failed, the comprehensive siege would succeed.

Iraq's steadfastness and President Saddam Husayn's historic leadership are the most outstanding features of the 20th century's most outstanding and ferocious battle. Neither ancient nor the modern history has seen such a massive array of forces ranged against such a small-sized people with a disproportionately strong will-power. Iraq's steadfastness illustrates that the Washington-Tel-Aviv plot to partition Iraq and defeat its nationalist movement, led by the peerless leader Saddam Husayn, has collapsed, with the Americans and Zionists left without any viable forces to help them weaken Iraq's unity.

The split in the ranks of the world's leading powers at the United Nations is a heavy blow to the alliance, which had attracted 30 nations by trickery and misrepresentations. If there is a lesson to be learned from the split at the Security Council, it is that Iraq's stamina and pan-Arab and socialist and independent policies have won the day. It is such principles that have shielded Iraq and its national unity, made it a role model, and turned the siege into an ever-increasing burden for the aggressors.

Paper Says UNSC Silence on Embargo 'No Longer Acceptable'

JN2303170194 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0747 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Mar (INA)—AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that the Security Council should fulfill its obligations toward Iraq after years of procrastination, delay, and conflicting individual views that have no legal or moral justification.

In an article published today, the newspaper says: While the Iraqi leadership's envoy meets with the UN secretary general again to put him in the picture of the situation, he is aware that the UN secretary general knows how far Iraq has implemented its obligations and the nature of the effective cooperation shown by Iraq throughout the past years. The envoy wants to emphasize to the secretary general the importance of activating the performance of the international organization in a manner that ends the pressuring and dictating policy imposed on it.

The newspaper says the Iraqi message of facts that reviewed Iraq's commitment to the text and spirit of UN resolutions in accordance with the sequence of paragraphs of these resolutions, and the state of dismay demonstrated by the representatives of Washington and London, have accurately reflected the extent of infraction and insistence on harming Iraq and the Iraqi people. This also showed the extent of hatred and arrogance that is pursued by Washington and its subservient agents.

AL-THAWRAH adds it has become visible to all that the first and final objective is a political one, and that the subject is more than a commitment to the spirit of resolutions in spite of the injustice and haphazardness of these resolutions.

It adds that briefing the Security Council on the facts and asking it to abide by what it approved has exposed everything. Silence is no longer acceptable, and this has been recently echoed by several permanent members who admitted the positive Iraqi steps.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by stressing that this new change is based on Iraq's steadfastness, firmness, and the jihad and courage of its people in patiently enduring afflictions. The coming days will bring news about the greatest victory over the tyrant and the collapse of the siege of the unjust.

Policies of Allied Nations Noted, Analyzed

JN2303172694 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 13 Mar 94 p 2

["Standpoint" column by 'Isa Isma'il al-'Abbadi: "Iraq's Unity Stronger"]

[Text] The press statement released by U.S., British, French, and Turkish representatives meeting in Ankara, amounts to interference in Iraqi internal affairs.

The four nations made unfounded allegations in an open attempt to justify maintaining the irregular status quo in northern Iraq.

It is universally recognized that conditions in al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Dahuk Governorates are the making of the allied nations of aggression that have facilitated the commission of murders, thefts, lootings, and the destruction of what Iraq has built over the years for the well-being of our Kurdish and Arab peoples alike.

The allied nations' brute force brought about a state of lawlessness in the north and in the no-fly zone, thereby encouraging rebellious gangs to wreak havoc in the region. These nations are directly responsible for the irregular conditions. They are meddling in the internal affairs of a founding member of the United Nations, whose laws and conventions the allied nations boast about upholding.

Shuffling the cards will not do. There is no reason why we should overlook the fact that the U.S. Administration and some of the allied nations are seeking to clothe their interference in Iraq's internal affairs in humanitarian garb. They are aware that their interference is unjustifiable and has a devastating impact on regional security and stability. Any attempt to undermine Iraq is in nobody's interest; indeed the last quarter century has shown it to be unavailing.

Turkey's assistant foreign minister Ozdom Sinberk's [name as published] remarks at the end of the four nations' session point to a chaotic meeting, where the double standard approach was obvious. The representatives of these nations advance justifications for their continued support of the rebellious forces in the north, retention of the no-fly zone, and the continued deployment of their troops on Turkish territory, and, in the same breath, contend they stand for Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. Concern for Iraq's unity and territorial integrity should translate into the hostile allied nations avoiding meddling in its internal affairs. Throughout history, Iraq has proved it can hold together and survive. Its people—both Arabs and Kurds—have shown that, when their brotherhood and sense of responsibility are brought to bear, they can sort out their problems for themselves.

Outside interference is illegitimate, and it can only bring with it woes and devastation, and jeopardize security and peace in the region.

Watching the session's proceedings, we are dismayed by Turkey's double-standard approach. How can Ankara note the need to lift the unfair embargo on Iraq on account of the enormous damage it has done to Turkey's and Iraq's national interests, while, at the same time, its representative notes the need, to quote the unsavory press release, for extending the presence of the multinational force stationed in Turkey to keep a close watch on developments in northern Iraq?

As a neighboring state with which Iraq has close bonds, one would expect Turkey to remember that its participation in illegitimate and illegal actions pursued by the Americans and their allies in northern Iraq goes against good neighborliness, the UN Charter, international law, and the 1926 Iraq-Turkey border treaty.

The Turks know only too well that only through effective cooperation with Iraq and reckoning with its national interests can they advance their national interests. Regional security and stability are hardly served by the aircraft and guns of one nation or another. They will only bring further outside interference in the region's affairs. The Turks also realize that the aggressive Americans harbor hostile intentions against the entire region, including Turkey itself. Any minute the Zionist advisers at the White House see fit to resurrect the human rights issue in Turkey, they will do so.

Peres: Cairo Meeting With 'Arafat 'Not Clear'

TA2303204494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2030 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres says it is still not clear whether he will meet Yasir 'Arafat in Cairo tomorrow. This evening Mr. Peres met Dennis Ross, the head of the U.S. peace team, and U.S. Ambassador Edward Djerejian. Prior to entering the meeting Mr. Peres said the discussions by the Israeli delegation in Cairo are serious, but we should not jump to conclusions.

Our correspondent Yiftah El'azar reports that Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin, who also participated in the meeting this evening, said that the evacuation of the Jewish settlers from Hebron is not on the agenda at the present time. Beilin hoped that the talks with the Palestinians would resume next week.

Peres on Cairo Talks; Ross-Rabin Meeting Reported

TA2403085294 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Progress has been made in the talks between Israel and the PLO in Cairo. Negotiations on the issue of protection for the Palestinians in Hebron may be completed by the end of the week. This was stated by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres stated yesterday at the end of a meeting with U.S. peace talks coordinator Dennis Ross. Peres stressed that before it proceeds to promote the Syrian track, Israel must reach an agreement with the Palestinians about the continuation of the peace process. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] By the end of the week the Israeli and PLO delegations meeting in Cairo will conclude the elements of the Hebron package which will enable the resumption of the negotiations on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres assessed last night. According to reports received in Jerusalem from the delegation headed by Major General Amnon Shahaq and Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir, progress has been made in the two main issues—the urban police force in Hebron and the nature of the international presence—but no agreement has yet been reached.

At this point, it seems that Peres will not go to Cairo to confer with PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat. However, one person who will be going to Cairo is U.S. peace talks coordinator Dennis Ross. After meeting him last night, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres commented on Israel's priorities in the peace process.

[Peres] If we reach an agreement with the Palestinians, the Syrian track will open. First of all, we must attain an agreement with the Palestinians and overcome all the unsolved problems. I think all of us will make a supreme effort to overcome them. We will see what happens in the next few days.

[Segal] In his meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Ross said he had found in Tunis a totally different 'Arafat than a week ago. 'Arafat is sure of himself, feels encouraged, and is prepared to make decisions, Ross told the Israelis.

The Syrian track did not come up in the meeting of the Israeli and U.S. teams, but only in the tete-a-tete meeting between Ross and Rabin. The impression is that Ross did not bring any dramatic tidings on the Syrian track. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 24 March carries an interview By Gid'on Remez with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin recorded after his meeting with Ross. Asked whether he shares the U.S. assessment about an imminent resumption of the peace negotiations, Rabin says: "First of all, I can tell you that the negotiations and dialogue in Cairo are a fact. Second, the U.S. peace team headed by Dennis Ross informed us that the Arab countries consent to resume the negotiations in Washington by the end of April, or maybe earlier."

[Asked whether the issue of an international presence in the territories has been settled, the prime minister says: "I will not go into details before the dialogue in Cairo is completed."

[Asked whether he is apprehensive that the Russians might attribute to themselves the success of resuming the process, Rabin replies: "I very much hope the process will resume by the end of April."]

[A report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer on pages 1 and 19 of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 24 March adds that Ross quoted al-Asad as having told him that "if Rabin wants peace in the northern border and the military operations against Israel to stop, he must reach a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the region with Syria."

[Al-Asad went on to say that he is trying to curb Hizballah and the Palestinian organizations operating against Israel, but he cannot promise an "hermetical closure" of the northern border against activities from Lebanon.

[Ross is reported to have told his Israeli counterparts that "al-Asad is aware of the fact that the time left to reach an arrangement in the region is running out."]

Peres Comments on Talks With PLO, Hebron

TA2403111994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres says that there is still a gap between Israel and the PLO and between the PLO and the people it is supposed to represent. According to Peres, PLO leaders say that the PLO gap with the local population is in the territories. We must take this argument seriously, he says, and enable the

PLO to go on representing the Palestinian peace camp. Our party affairs correspondent Shmu'el Tal reports:

[Begin Peres recording] I intend to turn the agreement with the PLO into reality. Many wonder about my support for 'Arafat. I do not support 'Arafat because he is who he is, but because he wants peace. I support peace, and 'Arafat today is one of the means to attain peace. We must act rapidly and reach conclusions. There is no sense in procrastinating since we gain nothing from it. Human lives are destroyed and the human soul is also ruined.

Some people ask: Do we not have the right to live in Hebron? Well, we have the right to live in Hebron. Some say: Are Jews not allowed to live in Hebron? Well, we can live in Hebron. The problem is not one of rights but of blood.

When peace is attained, I have no doubt that Jews will be able to move and live in Hebron. Today it is not a question of moving or living there, but of confrontation and death. It is the government's duty to lower the level of friction. In the present situation, which is so emotionally charged, imagine that Arab residents of Israel were to buy a plot of land near the great synagogue in Jerusalem or near the Karmel market in Tel Aviv. How would Israelis react? We must take a realistic look at the situation. Attitudes must change before we decide on the final location. [sentence as heard] [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 24 March adds: "Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres noted that hatred and hostility keep growing in the territories, and the Army cannot prevent it. He believes that politicians must make courageous decisions, should not pass the buck to the military level, and should not insist that the Army cope with an impossible, no-win situation."]

Syrian Soldier Defects, Seeks Political Asylum

TA2403131194 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] A 20-year-old Syrian soldier has defected to Israel and asked for political asylum. This was learned by our correspondent Qobi Mandel, and he is on the phone with the initial details:

The 20-year-old Syrian soldier, Jasim Khadir, was captured two days ago on the Israeli-Syrian border after he crossed the border fence. The soldier underwent commando training with al-Sa'iqah, a pro-Syrian organization. He told his interrogators that he decided to defect to Israel and ask for political asylum here because he was mistreated by his Syrian commander, a ranking Major. My commander deprived me of my military rights, he said today in the 'Akko Magistrates Court.

The representative of the Minorities Squad of the Galilee District Police said at the court that the soldier's version still needs to be verified through the appropriate channels. Justice Faris Falah accepted the police request, and ordered that the Syrian soldier's remand to custody be extended by 15 days.

Baraq Testifies Before Hebron Inquiry Commission

TA2303174794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq today testified before the Shamgar Commission on the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre. Baraq said the massacre in Hebron fell on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] like a bolt from the blue and was totally unexpected. Our correspondent Mira Amsalem reports:

[Begin recording] [Amsalem] The chief of staff's testimony is continuing now behind closed doors, and this will bring to an end today's proceedings. This morning the chief of staff also testified for two hours behind closed doors. Baraq's public testimony also lasted for two hours. Baraq's testimony was fluent, firm, and extremely lucid. He said the IDF is acting on the basis of what it estimates to be reasonable and expected. A massacre is not an event that the Army could have prepared itself for. A bolt out of the blue—this is how Baraq termed the incident. Baraq said that the security procedures at the cave where good, but even so the massacre could not have been prevented—rather only minimized—had these procedures been adhered to.

The chief of staff opened his public testimony with an hour-long review of the situation. The first part dealt with the situation in the territories; the threat of terrorism, dangers stemming from terrorist acts, and the pursuit of fugitives. Baraq said this situation has exacerbated since the beginning of the intifadah, and that things got even worse after the Oslo agreement and in the wake of the political process. During all this time the IDF has initiated an active campaign against Palestinian terrorism. The chief of staff said this was the IDF's main mission in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, as he himself and the defense minister have explained to all the Army echelons. The chief of staff said that Colonel Me'ir Kalifi, Major General Sha'ul Mufaz, and Major General Dani Yatom are the officers in charge of the struggle on the ground—and these three were also the three senior IDF witnesses at the Shamgar Commission. The chief of staff defined their work as complicated and difficult.

During the second part of his review the chief of staff explained the IDF's open-fire orders. He said they were formulated by the General Staff and approved at the most senior legal levels. He said they have not been changed in terms of law or principles, but there have been adaptations to new situations on the ground. Baraq said the measures adopted by the soldiers on the ground were also kept proportional to the dangers confronting them. Baraq said the orders left a large room of discretion for the soldiers on the ground. The Army chose to simplify the orders rather than going into the fine details of hypothetical situations, as was deemed appropriate by jurists.

The chief of staff said that there was no order not to fire at Jews. Let us hear how Baraq described this issue:

[Baraq] In no case is there, nor can there be, an IDF order saying it is forbidden to fire at a settler even if he is directing gunfire at other people or at the soldiers. On the contrary, there is an order relating to life-threatening situations explicitly stating the opposite. If there was a misunderstanding—and from some of the testimony it appears some people did misunderstand the orders—it could have stemmed from misunderstanding answers given to soldiers during briefings. This issue should indeed be investigated, and normally we would have thoroughly investigated it by ourselves. Now I am not certain we should do so, in view of the fact that the issue is being examined by this commission of inquiry, among others.

[Amsalem] The chief of staff said no briefings are held in anticipation of a massacre. This is how Baraq defined the massacre:

[Baraq] All this is not required for a massacre. Here everything is clear. A massacre is a massacre is a massacre. There is no need for special orders or directives to know what has to be done in such cases.

[Amsalem] Baraq said the misunderstanding of the orders stemmed either from the briefings or from temporary procedures introduced several months ago regarding imposing the law on Israelis in the territories. These procedures included a clause dealing with directing shots at Israelis. The chief of staff said these procedures did not deal with life-threatening situations.

Baraq said that in the six years of the intifadah there has not been even one case in which a soldier saw an Israeli shooting without a reason. There were no fatalities stemming from criminal acts perpetrated in the presence of soldiers. The chief of staff finished his review with a comparison of the IDF with the French Army fighting in Algeria. He said the problems were somewhat similar; in Algiers, however, the French Army suffered a moral deterioration, whereas the IDF is trying to preserve moral standards.

After Baraq's review ended, the questions started. Justice al-Zu'bi wanted to find out if the chief of staff bears responsibility for the massacre. Baraq said he bears the overall responsibility, but the chief of staff's responsibility detracts nothing from the responsibility borne by any officer regarding his sphere of command and concrete responsibility—this is how the chief of staff differentiated between his responsibility and that of the officers on the ground.

Answering another question regarding the settlers' right to bring weapons into the cave, Baraq said there was no room to change this, because there was no concrete warning regarding dangers posed by Jews:

[Baraq] We did not expect a murder by such a lunatic, we did not expect this sort of action. We did not conceive of the possibility of such an action. I am afraid that in order to be honest with ourselves we must state that such a suicidal and determined lunatic can murder people; he can murder Israeli citizens and Palestinian Arabs. In other places in the world such a lunatic can carry out mass massacres, shoot down jetliners, or murder the president of a superpower who is guarded by an entire secret service. I think we should have no illusions regarding what we cannot accomplish. I think it is impractical to act on the assumption that the IDF or any other element can come up with a foolproof security plan which would give a complete answer to any coldblooded or lunatic suicide attack.

[Amsalem] Answering a question posed by commission member Menahem Ya'ari, the chief of staff expressed reservations about comments made by Yisra'el Bluementhal, head of Hebron's home guard, who issued the IDF weapons to Goldstein. Bluementhal defined the massacre as a battle. The chief of staff ended his public appearance by stating that in the restrictions under which it is operating, the IDF is imposing law and order in an even-handed fashion. [end recording]

Commander: Hebron Operation 'Still Under Way'

TA2403080494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Major General Dani Yatom, commander of the Central Command, has said that the operation in Hebron is still under way and that the search of the house in which the terrorists entrenched themselves is not yet over. He said that in the course of the battle he spotted the bodies of three terrorists through his binoculars, while another soldier reported that he had killed a terrorist on the first evening of the battle.

Maj. Gen. Yatom added that the troops are operating carefully to avoid hitting local inhabitants and exposing IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers to unnecessary danger. He pointed out that antitank rockets were only fired at the building occupied by the terrorists. He further told our correspondent Moti Amir that the three soldiers who were lightly injured two days ago had been hit when a soldier accidentally dropped his machine gun.

[A report by military correspondent Eytan Rabin on page A2 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 24 March adds that Maj. Gen. Sha'ul Mufaz, commander of IDF troops in the West Bank, and Colonel Me'ir Kalifi, commander of the Hebron Brigade, were wounded in the operation yesterday. Mufaz, who commanded the operation, was injured "very lightly," while Kalifi sustained "light" injuries. Both of them were hit by shrapnel ricocheting from a door frame. The report goes on to say that a total of seven soldiers were lightly injured in the operation by bullets and shrapnel.]

Gen. Yatom went on to say that none of the terrorists turned themselves in despite repeated pleas by Hebron notables.

7 Hebron Arabs Wounded; Bomb Thrown in Bethlehem

TA2303151594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Seven Arabs were wounded by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire in Hebron today during disturbances and riots in the al-Shaykh neighborhood. Our correspondent Moti Amir was told by local hospitals that the seven were slightly wounded and are being treated in the hospitals.

An explosive charge was thrown at the military government court building in Bethlehem this afternoon, but nobody was hurt in this incident.

Palestinians Wounded in Riots in Nabulus, Jabalyah

TA2403090294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] There were riots in Nabulus today. Eight locals were lightly wounded by soldiers' gunfire. A curfew was clamped in the center of the city.

Riots also occurred in Jabalyah in the Gaza Strip. There, too, eight people were wounded.

IDF Seen Preparing for Possible Hebron Evacuation

TA2003094094 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Mar 94 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin and Nadav Shragay]

[Text] Last weekend, Major General Sha'ul Mufaz, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in Judaea and Samaria, instructed the commander of the Hebron battalion to ask Uri Qrasan, the security officer of the Jewish settlement in Hebron, to provide him with specifics regarding the measurements and weight of all the mobile homes in Tall al-Rumaytha. Qrasan was also asked to estimate the number of people that can, theoretically, occupy each such home (probably to determine the number of settlers that can barricade themselves in the homes and oppose evacuation). Qrasan has given the Army his answers.

The Hebron settlers believe the request indicates that the IDF is attempting to prepare a contingency or practical plan for the evacuation of the site, where seven families currently reside.

The curfew on Hebron and its surroundings will be lifted today or tomorrow at the latest. The curfew was imposed on the city three weeks ago, immediately after the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre. The decision to lift the curfew was made after a series of discussions in which the participants heard reports about the distress of the Palestinian population. At the same time, fear was expressed that once life in Hebron returns to normal, riots might erupt and clashes between the Army, the residents, and the settlers might take place.

Before the curfew is lifted, additional IDF and Border Police troops will be stationed in Hebron.

The Tomb of the Patriarchs will not be opened to the public at this stage. The IDF is currently working out new procedures and security measures for the site, including separate entrances for the two nationalities. It has already been decided to prohibit bringing arms into the tomb. Security sources believe that riots will break out when the curfew is lifted. If the riots evolve into serious incidents, the curfew will be reimposed.

The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza has begun preparing for the possibility of the government's ordering the IDF to evacuate the Hebron settlers. The settlement leaders have contacted groups in Qiryat Arba' and other settlements in a bid to thwart the evacuation. They plan to call thousands of people to Hebron once they learn of an imminent evacuation.

Seven families currently reside in Tall al-Rumaytha: The family of Kakh leader Barukh Marzel, who is currently wanted after an administrative detention order was issued against him; the family of David Shir'el, whose gun was taken from him; the Ra'anan family (headed by the grandson of Rabbi Avraham Hakohen Kook); the family of Uri Qrasan, the Hebron Jewish settlement security officer; the Ben-Yitzhaq family; and the Horowitz family [six families named as published].

The rising tension in Hebron and the fear of terror attacks have led the General Staff to decide to cancel the training schedules of infantry units and deploy them for active duty in the territories and Lebanon. For example, a combat unit that has just completed a tour of active duty in Lebanon was about to begin a series of exercises. By order of Major General Dani Yatom, commander of the Central Command, the soldiers were sent for active duty in the West Bank. The same has happened with other military units.

A senior military source said: "Everyone is waiting for the big bang. Canceling training schedules is not good, but everyone is under pressure. We are expecting an Arab retaliation. No one is happy about canceling drills and exercises, but this is dictated by the reality in the field."

Closure Said To Remain in Effect Through 2 Apr

TA2303163294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 23 Mar 94

[Text] The closure on the territories will continue until after the Passover holiday [2 April], which begins on Saturday night [27 March]. Police Commissioner Rafi

Peled told Qol Yisra'el that when the holiday ends, the security forces will reassess the situation. But in the meantime, he said, the closure has calmed things down in the territories. He said that when it is lifted, the security situation is expected to get worse, particularly in Jerusalem.

Government Urged To Remove 'Tumor' From Hebron

TA2303143594 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Mar 94 p B1

[Commentary by Dan Margalit: "One Government, Two Fronts"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The time has come to extirpate the cancerous tumor from Hebron, the city of our patriarchs. Not as a gesture to 'Arafat (which is unnecessary) or to tacitly fulfill the yearnings of the United States, but as a collective punishment to be meted out by the government—and this time directed against the settlers.

Rabin was surprised that many settlers cherish the memory of Dr. Barukh Goldstein. Their leaders threaten that there will be more such doctors. Peres is ashamed of them? Deputy Education Minister Mikha Goldman incurs the wrath of religious teachers because he criticizes the assassin. All this deserves punishment.

Punishment to the rabbi of Qiryat Arba' who issued a frightful halakhic edict making the lives of all Palestinians fair game, as if the word "innocent" no longer applied to them; punishment to Knesset members of the National Religious Party who sing the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] praises all year round, but this week trampled over its roadblocks on their way to Hebron to rally around Rabbi Moshe Levinger; and stiff punishment for all those people communing with the mediums, psychics, and spirits gathering on moonless nights around Goldstein's grave.

All of them must know that this government is choking the settlements, not to meet the wishes of the Palestinians or the Americans, but for the sake of the Jews. So that every settler threatening the peace process with "more Goldsteins" should know that if he makes good on his threat Qiryat Arba' will also be shut down; not as part of a Jewish-Arab settling of scores but as a result of purely Jewish introspection and soul searching.

Such a move enjoys the support of an overwhelming majority in Israeli public opinion. It also enjoys a majority by the standards of the opposition which has been questioning whether the government enjoys an absolute Jewish majority. One may also hazard a guess that such a majority also exists among Likud voters, who may be willing to fight for Qiryat Arba' but not for the provocation embodied in Tall al-Rumaythah.

Also, removing the Jews from the heart of Hebron is feasible. All the government needs is an ultimatum and an evacuation order. Those who do not leave Bet Hadassah and Tall al-Rumaythah and go back to Qiryat Arba' would be left to fend for themselves in Hebron. Of course, they would be solely responsible for the consequences. Only the children would be taken away from their parents and transferred to a protected site nearby. Once the "Bet Hadassah" tumor is gone there will be no "more Goldsteins," since Qiryat Arba' will take care to rein them in to spare itself the fate of Tall al-Rumaythah.

Ship Denied al-'Aqabah Entry Amidst Talks With U.S.

JN2403111794 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 24 Mar 94 pp 1, 5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—A German vessel denied entry to al-'Aqabah was on its way Wednesday [23 March] to another port in the Red Sea to unload part of its cargo to meet the demands of the U.S.-led enforcers of the international sanctions against Iraq, shipping officials said.

The 1300-tonne Skyman, carrying 3,000-tonnes of general cargo for Jordan, is the second al-'Aqabah-bound vessel to be turned away this month and the seventh to be intercepted and delayed this year, said Sufyan Muhaysin, manager of the Jordan Shipping Agents Association.

The Red Sea Energy, operated by a consortium of British, German and French companies, was turned away last week after the inspectors found two 20-feet containers carrying zinc phosphorate for Iraq.

The inspectors' decision came despite documents attending U.N. Sanctions Committee approval for the consignment of the chemical, used in the detergent industry, shipping sources said.

As a rule, anything classified as "chemicals" comes under close scrutiny of the inspectors. In many cases, entry to al-'Aqabah is categorically denied.

The interceptions came against intensified moves by the government to alleviate the negative impact of the sanctions enforcement on Jordan's economy and a call by Parliament for the Kingdom to refuse to return to the American backed Arab-Israeli peace talks until the "siege of al-'Aqabah" is lifted.

Information Minister Jawad al-'Anani told reporters after talks with U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross late Tuesday that Mr. Ross had promised to consider Jordan's grievances over the continuing blockade, which is severely hampering the Kingdom's maritime operations and trade.

The stepped-up interceptions of ships entering the Gulf of Aqaba come amid follow-up efforts to a proposal to move the inspection of cargo to the port from the Iran Straits where it is taking place new.

The proposal was expected to have been discussed by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali and Dr. al-'Anani during their meeting with Mr. Ross.

Under the proposal, an independent international agency, most probably Lloyd Register of London, will inspect all incoming and outgoing cargo at the port for violations of the international sanctions against Iraq instead of the multinational naval task force led by American warships now patrolling the Red Sea.

Contacts are continuing among Jordanian, American and U.N. officials as well as representatives of Lloyd Register on various aspects of the proposed arrangement, sources said. However, no one could provide any definite information as to the progress achieved.

Independent land-based inspections by an international agency, from the Jordanian viewpoint, will remove all hurdles that ship owners cite to justify higher freight charges to and from al-'Aqabah to buffet extra costs incurred as a result of the delays caused by inspections at sea.

At present, Jordanian importers pay $500 per 20-feet container and $1,000 per 40-feet container over and above the regular freight charges to al-'Aqabah. The surcharge for non-containerised cargo is around $15 per tonne.

In addition are extra costs paid by importers to bring their cargo to al-'Aqabah if the original ships carrying them are forced to off load them at other Red Sea ports.

"Cargo inaccessibility," one of the main reasons cited by the inspectors for turning ships away from al-'Aqabah, was also the reason for the Skyman being denied entry to al-'Aqabah despite efforts by the crew of the ship to rearrange cargo for inspection.

Ibrahim Nauri, an official of the agents of the vessel, said inspectors boarded the Skyman four times between Saturday and Tuesday before refusing it permission to proceed to al-'Aqabah.

Mr. Muhaysin said the Skyman and the Red Sea Energy were the third and fourth ships to be turned away from al-'Aqabah since the beginning of the year, the two others came back after unloading or rearranging cargo for inspection. The crew of three other vessels managed to rearrange cargo while at sea to satisfy the inspectors' demands, he said.

According to U.S. Navy figures, the naval task force, which is now supported by four American warships, has queried 19,800 ships over radio, boarded more than 8000 for closer checks, and turned away 450 since it took up station following the imposition of the sanctions against Iraq in August 1990.

House Deputies Want Peace Talks, al-'Aqaba Linked

JN2303182294 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Mar 94 pp 1, 5

[Report By Sohayr 'Ubaydat and P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—The Lower House of Parliament Tuesday [22 March] called on the government not to resume its peace negotiations with Israel until the U.S.-led blockade on the Red Sea port of al-'Aqabah is actually lifted and the lifting is announced at the U.N. Security Council.

The call by the legislature came shortly before U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross arrived in Amman as part of Washington's preparations to resume the next round of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

It also came against the backdrop of reports that a German vessel carrying general cargo bound for Jordan was blocked at the Tiran Straits at the mouth of al-'Aqabah. The ship was prevented from proceeding to al-'Aqabah when it arrived at the straits on Friday, shipping agents said.

Officials said the interceptions of al-'Aqabah-bound ships as part of the enforcement of the 43-month-old international sanctions against Iraq were one of the key topics for discussions with Mr. Ross.

The lawmakers' statement said: "The Jordanian Parliament condemns the continued American aggression against the Arab Nation in implementation of the American aims to control Arab wealth and serve Israel's interests in the region."

"It also condemns the unjust American embargo which continues to deprive the brotherly Iraqi people of food and medicine and basic services and the unjust blockade of the port of al-'Aqabah aimed at pressing Jordan through all means and methods to deprive its freedom of decision in all matters related to the Arab Nation," said the statement.

We request the government not to go back to the negotiations table until the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba is actually lifted and the lifting is announced at the U.N. Security Council," it said.

During a session of Parliament earlier in the day, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told the lawmakers that the government was pursuing all efforts to lift the blockade of al-'Aqabah.

Dr. Abd-al-Salam al-Majali said he had met with U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan Jr. Tuesday morning to lodge a protest against the continuing blockage at al-'Aqabah.

Dr. al-Majali referred to the repeated presentations Jordan made to the U.S. and the U.N. Security Council, which imposed the sanctions against Iraq following that country's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

He was replying to deputies, some of whom demanded that Jordan, whose economy is suffering as a result of the blockade at al-'Aqabah, refuse to abide by the sanctions against Iraq.

While that was not possible in view of Jordan's long standing commitment to international resolutions and decision of the U.N. Security Council, the Kingdom is following up on proposals which would do away with the negative impact on Jordan of the interceptions of al-'Aqabah-bound shipping, officials said.

"The process is continuing," said a senior official, referring to a proposal that the inspection of goods coming to Jordan be moved to al-'Aqabah port rather than the Tiran Straits.

The proposal, tabled during a January visit to the U.S. of His Majesty King Husayn, was reportedly received positively by U.S. administration officials, but the pace of follow-up process is very slow, officials said.

Under the proposal, an independent agency shipping unit, would carry out the inspections of all cargo being unloaded at Aqaba for violations of the sanctions against Iraq.

In his comments to Deputies, Dr. al-Majali recalled that the government had sent a strong protest to the Security Council several weeks ago pointing out that the inspection of Jordan-bound ships at high seas was illegal and was hindering the Kingdom's regular maritime operations.

Dr. al-Majali was asked by deputy 'Abdallah Akhu Irshaydah to clarify a report that Jordan had shipped 80 tones of chemicals to Iraq.

"For the best interests of Iraq, I prefer not to answer that question," Dr. al-Majali said.

Informed sources said the reported shipment was of chemicals for refinery. No further detail was immediately available.

The latest ship to be intercepted by the U.S.-led naval forces patrolling the Red Sea was the German Skyman, carrying 3,000 tones of cargo for Jordan, said Ibrahim al-Na'uri, an official of the Gharghur Shipping Agency.

He said the inspectors kept the vessel waiting for one day at the straits before inspecting on Saturday and ruling that cargo aboard the ship was not accessible to them for inspections.

"They checked the ship four times since then," Mr. al-Na'uri told the JORDAN TIMES. "The last inspection took place Tuesday afternoon."

Mr. al-Na'uri said he had contacted the government as well as parliamentarians over the stand-off.

According to Mr. al-Na'uri, Jordan-bound cargo aboard the Skyman include steel rods, animal feed and general cargo and the ship is not carrying any goods destined for Iraq.

At least four ships were intercepted and delayed at the Tiran Straits during February in what was seen an escalation of what Jordanian officials and shipping agents describe as intentional harassment of al-Aqabah-bound vessels despite American pledges to address Jordan's repeated pleas for an end to the siege of its only port.

Deputies Assail 'Arrogant' U.S. Tactics

PM2303130094 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 6

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi: "Jordanian House of Representatives Condemns U.S. Navy's Uncivilized Methods in Gulf of Aqaba"]

[Excerpt] Amman—The Jordanian House of Representatives yesterday vehemently attacked the United States, condemning the "uncivilized measures and methods" practiced by the U.S. Navy in the Gulf of Aqaba as part of the U.S. pressures exerted on Jordan.

The House decided to issue a statement condemning what one deputy termed "a serious precedent which is an extension of U.S. arrogance toward the Arab nation."

'Ali Abu-al-Raghib, a center deputy, described U.S. measures in the Gulf of Aqaba as "an arrogant and uncivilized method which brings to mind the cowboy method which developed into the destroyers policy."

In a statement delivered on behalf of 20 deputies in the House's final meeting in its first ordinary session, Abu-al-Raghib said that the U.S. Navy "is—with no justification—sending back al-'Aqabah-bound ships after inspecting them in a manner that conflicts with UN instructions."

He added that this issue "has become a heavy burden on the Jordanian economy and Jordanians." He pointed out that European shipping companies have threatened to suspend shipping operations to al-'Aqabah port. He also said that the tough inspection measures are applied to Jordan, out of all the states neighboring Iraq.

Deputy 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, a former minister, urged the government not to return to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations before the United States lifts "the sea blockade imposed on al-'Aqabah."

Deputy Muhammad Dawudyah described the U.S. behavior as "muscle-flexing, arrogance, and encroachment on national sovereignty. It is an insult to us and represents a state aggression and state terrorism."

Dawudyah, who held the post of director of the information office in the Royal Court before his election as deputy, added that the "U.S. position reflects hostility toward the Arab nation"—which requires "a pause for examination lest this hostile position on al-'Aqabah affects the peace issue and our national rights." he said: "How can we allow anyone who carries out all these actions against us to become a broker, partner, and sponsor in major issues?"

Well-informed Jordanian sources have told AL-HAYAH that Jordan is being subjected to strong U.S. pressures to force it to rush to to sign a peace agreement with Israel. [passage omitted]

U.S. Pressure on Jordan To Have 'Adverse Impact'

PM2103124494 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "United States Steps Up Its Pressure To Reactivate Jordanian-Israeli Track"]

[Text] Amman—A high-ranking Jordanian official yesterday accused the United States of stepping up its pressure on his country and exerting political, economic, and media pressure to force Jordan to take rapid steps toward a peaceful solution with Israel "that is incompatible with its national and strategic interests."

The official said that Washington continues to impose a maritime blockade on the Jordanian port of al-'Aqabah, and it is exerting efforts to keep Jordan in a state of Arab isolation and working to deny the Kingdom U.S. and European financial aid.

He pointed out that the U.S. Administration "stepped up its pressure" on Amman after Palestinian-Israeli negotiations faltered following the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in Hebron, with a view to "reactivating the peace process through the Jordanian-Israeli track." The official warned that these pressures "will have an adverse impact on the negotiations with Israel and weaken the chances of achieving progress on the Jordanian track."

A high-level Jordanian authority has said that the United States continues to impose the blockade on the port of al-'Aqabah through the search operations conducted by its warships in the Gulf of Aqaba, despite the U.S. Administration's promises to lift the blockade and secure alternatives to guarantee implementation of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq.

He pointed out that Washington "has since the eruption of the Gulf crisis imposed strict surveillance on Jordanian imports and exports to Iraq, without taking any real measures to watch trade exchange between Iran and each of Turkey, Iran, and Syria..., with a view to punishing Jordan for its position during the crisis, using surveillance as an excuse for continuing the pressure on it in the context of the peace process."

He pointed out that Washington "completely ignored" the stipulations of the economic embargo resolution, namely the need to compensate the other states harmed by the embargo.

He went on to say that the continuing economic pressure on the Kingdom and efforts aimed at keeping Jordan "without any Arab option and pushing it toward Israel will not serve the peace issue in the Middle East." He stressed that "it is no longer a secret that Washington is not satisfied with the rapprochement and coordination between Amman and Damascus in the framework of the peace negotiations" with Israel.

Meanwhile, Jordanian liberal deputy 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has said that Washington insists on keeping

Jordan "either on its knees or on the tips of its toes" to ensure that it will implement requirements for the peace process' success "in accordance with the Israeli-U.S. conditions." He stressed that the U.S. pressures, "which include media accusations of Jordan's involvement in providing military aid to Jordan during the Gulf crisis, will not change the principles and constants to which we adhered." He said that these "pressures will fail, just as the pressures exerted on us to participated in the Camp David negotiations failed."

He added that the United States, which "used to be a support for Jordan, has now become a burden on it, and it is no longer easy to defend U.S. policy in the region."

He defended the Jordanian-Syrian relationship, saying: "The time has come to establish a distinct relationship with Syria in the framework of balanced relations with the Arab states, without establishing one at the expense of another." He pointed out that in current conditions Jordan "needs an essential Arab rear, despite the attempts to keep it isolated from its brothers."

Columnist Demands End To 'Seige' on al-'Aqabah

JN2403112794 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 24 Mar 94 pp 22, 21

["Arab Opinion" column by Mahmud al-Rimawi: "Siege and Negotiations"]

[Text] Does the request made by some esteemed deputies to suspend the Jordanian-Israeli talks until the United States, through the UN Security Council, publicly and practically lifts the siege imposed on the port of al-'Aqabah seem "exaggerated" since the negotiations are being held with Tel Aviv and not Washington? The answer is no.

The United States is the godfather of the settlement and negotiations are being held on its territory. Because of this, a U.S. delegation, led by Dennis Ross, is touring the Arab capitals to expedite the negotiations. The Americans themselves consider their role in the peace process a full-partner role. But such a partnership cannot hold when Washington is appeasing and blindly siding with the Israeli occupiers. It even pressures the Arab parties, including Jordan, under the pretext of its stand on the war in the Gulf; a war that ended more than three years ago and in which Jordan played no role.

As far as we know, several U.S. promises were given over the past two years to lift the unjust siege imposed on the port of al-'Aqabah, Jordan's only maritime outlet to the world. These promises have not been realized at all, even while the U.S. statements were praising the responsible Jordanian role on more than one level, inducing its role in the peace process. This situation dictates a legitimate Jordanian stand in the face of the violations, which threaten the rights of sea navigation and trade and which cause major damage to the Jordanian economy. These challenges are not founded on international law or the resolutions of international legitimacy. They are brought about by a U.S. decision aimed at pressuring Jordan and influencing its steadfastness and stability. This will later reflect on the course of the negotiations, where Israeli intransigence continues on the Jordanian-Israeli track of negotiations as well as on other tracks.

Consequently, if Washington is truly concerned—and so far it is not—about the stability and growth of the Jordanian-U.S. relationship and for the resumption of negotiations in an appropriate atmosphere, then there has to be a swift U.S. decision to lift the unfair and illogical siege imposed on the only Jordanian port. It also requires pressuring Tel Aviv, the aggressor party, to abide by the resolutions of international legitimacy and start implementing them by withdrawing from the occupied territories, including the Jordanian territory. This will herald the beginning of a new age in the region; an age that guarantees the rights and interests of all parties without exception; and an age that ends once and for all the use of force or the threat of the use of force, as Israel has always done. Israel is the only state in the region that carries out military infringement and violations under the very eyes of the United States, and collects limitless support from it as well.

Editorial Urges U.S. Action on al-Aqabah 'Siege'

JN2303160194 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 17

[Editorial: "Will Ross's Administration Translate Words Into Deeds"]

[Text] Not much has changed since the last visit to Amman by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross regarding the siege imposed on the Port of al-'Aqabah and the losses estimated at millions of dinars that it causes.

The U.S. Administration has spoken in positive words about Jordan and its balanced and responsible policy. Yet this administration has not translated these words into solid facts. It continues to besiege al-'Aqabah, the sole naval outlet of this country which has endured the results of all events and regional and international conflicts throughout the previous decades without any justification or legal pretext.

Jordan for years has stood as a model state that knows its responsibilities on the national, pan-Arab, and international levels. It has continued to bear all the results of these responsibilities, in terms of its obligations toward the causes of the homeland and nation. It has continued to respect international norms, charters, and resolutions. Jordan has continued to bear the heaviest burden caused by regional developments, responsibility for which is shouldered by international and regional parties, led by the state of occupation and aggression, Israel.

Ross's visit to Jordan is a suitable opportunity to remind him and the U.S. Administration about direct and indirect U.S. responsibility for many problems facing this country, which has a sensitive regional position. What is needed is to expedite the translation of positive U.S. words about Jordan and its role into practical results, foremost of which is lifting the siege imposed on al-'Aqabah, Jordan's only naval outlet.

Ross's visit, which precedes the new round of negotiations on various tracks, is supposed to bring in new elements that justify the resumption of these negotiations, whose realization is blocked by Israel.

Certainly, we do not expect the U.S. envoy to ask for any concessions from us so the negotiations will succeed. Otherwise, this would be as if he is asking us to unconditionally surrender in the face of Israel's intransigence. In addition to the fact that we do not accept capitulation—no matter how much pressure we face—it is an established fact that a peace that is not just and that doesn not meet the people's demands to restore their usurped rights will not last.

Editor on U.S. 'Brainwashing,' New Ambassador

JN2303124394 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 32

["With Life and People" column by Chief Editor Dr. Musa al-Kilani: "A Brainwashing Attempt"]

[Text] The arrival of the new U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan has coincided with a clever [U.S.] propaganda campaign which seeks to change the convictions of the people of this country in favor of Washington.

It is known that Ambassador Egan was the real dynamo in the U.S. Embassy in Cairo during a critical and crucial period of time. Robert Pelletreau, a Palestinian affairs expert, was ambassador at the time and Egan was deputy chief of mission.

In this context, it was not a surprise to see Carl Brown, a renowned U.S. historian and Middle East expert, come to Amman to give lectures—four in one day—through which he tried to convince our citizens that the Americans, including Schwarzkopf and Bush, are the new angels, and that the Arabs, including Saddam and Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman, should heed their message.

Twisting historical facts, the Harvard University professor denied that American culture is affected by the roots of Jewish thought, which believes in millenarianism, an ideology which requires that the promised land be purged of Arabs and their holy places on Temple Mount be removed!

Professor Carl Brown also attempted to undermine the main theme in Dr. Edward Said's writings, in which Said explains that the seeds of anti-Arab Talmudic ideology are implanted in the U.S. mentality and control its rhythm during times of political emergencies. Dr. Said also explains that the contemporary U.S. political course is a disguised, cunning extension of the historical Western onslaught against the Muslim East, an onslaught that began with the crusades centuries ago, before being developed into a European military, political, and demographic hegemony in the past two centuries.

In addition to the four "missionary" lectures, yesterday's lecture by Richard Armitage, a former deputy U.S. defense secretary, tried to convince us as Arabs that we needed the massacre of worshipers at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque to resume the Washington negotiations.

I have to wonder in astonishment: Didn't the Washington negotiations attain their highest impetus several days before the massacre?

Has the blood of the Hebron martyrs been forgotten so soon after 25 February 1994?

What is the political price that the enemy has paid?

Didn't UN Security Council Resolution 904 constitute a political and moral gain for Israel when [Washington] failed to recognize East Jerusalem as an occupied Palestinian territory, something which would later lead to considering it an indivisible part of the unified capital of Israel?

Our political stupidity has led us to a weaker political position after the massacre than before it.

Hasn't there been a change in the view on the Israeli settlements on Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim territory? The settlements, which were once viewed as "illegitimate," then as "an obstacle to peace," are now viewed as "part of the status quo." Furthermore, in a show of extreme political humiliation, the Arabs only demanded that the settlers be prevented from carrying weapons inside Arab cities. This is a humiliating image of submission which reminds us of the story of one of Timur Lenk's soldiers who stopped some Damascus residents in an alley and ordered them not to move until he comes back with his sword, which he forgot to carry on that particular day. To his surprise, when the soldier came back with his sword, he found them in the same place, humbly and submissively awaiting him. He killed them.

I believe that the U.S. propaganda campaign in Jordan that seeks to brainwash us into forgetting that millenarianism, includes the seeds of racist rancor against Muslim Arabs in general and against the Palestinians in particular. In terms of haughtiness, it is a Nazi thought. It is an idea Oliver North believed in, Jimmy Carter, the priest president, preached, and some U.S. policy planners embrace. It is the same thought that despises the Muslim Arabs for "desecrating" Temple Mount. Some of the preachers of messianism believe in the need to expedite the return of the "savior" to forgive their sins and to allow them into his Kingdom. According to some of their scriptures, this will not happen before the chosen people are reinstated over the entire promised land.

Here we say: The United States is the incubator of the criminal ideology targeting the sons of Palestine. The training camps of the Jewish Defense League in New

York, Tallahassee, Nevada, and Oregon have supplied Kahana [movement] with all the money and men that it needed in the past. These are the same camps that transferred $3 million to Marzel, chief of the Kahana Hay movement. Barukh [Goldstein] was the first of the group's members to move to Hebron, and he will be followed by a second, third, and twentieth Barukh in the al-Aqsa Mosque, the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock.

I had hoped that U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan, who is a seasoned veteran and experienced man, would have started his mission in Jordan by communicating to us a decision by the U.S. Administration to prevent the Defense League and Kahana Hay organizations from setting up their terrorist camps in the United States and to ban encouraging raising funds for those organizations through tax exemptions.

I had hoped that I would have seen a good gesture of lifting the siege of the port of al-'Aqabah by the U.S. warships, a siege that is aimed against Jordan rather than Iraq, as evidenced by the fact that Turkey is allowed to carry out all forms of commercial transactions with Iraq, as has been stated by Turkish Prime Minister Ciller.

The sons of this homeland, both Palestinians and Jordanians, are clever. The recent brainwashing attempts will be useless on them.

The blood of our martyrs in Palestine, Hebron, al-Karamah [a Jordan Valley area in which a battle between Jordanian and Israeli troops took place in 1968], Gaza, the al-Ruwayshid Highway, and Jerusalem has been turned into a vaccine which will immunize us against the arguments of Armitage and Carl Brown and the implicit and explicit techniques of psychological warfare.

When 'Ala' Hijazi and 'Imad 'Aql [Hamas activists] were martyred, both of them became targets of an intensive U.S. television campaign that sought to obliterate our genuine character through professional messages addressed to the subconscious.

However, the martyrs vaccine eventually prevailed, because Almighty God blessed this homeland when He said: The al-Aqsa Mosque "whose precincts we did bless." [part of Koranic verse]

Abu-Sharif Urges Reconsidering Oslo, Cairo Accords

JN2303145694 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 24

[Report by Riyad Mansur]

[Text] Amman—Bassam Abu-Sharif, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, has proposed that the Arab cordon [al-tawq] states participating in the peace talks set up an operations center to follow the progress of negotiations on a daily basis. This center, he said, should be supported by the rest of the Arab states in order to influence the position of the United States, which sees itself as a peace partner.

Speaking to SAWT AL-SHA'B yesterday before his departure from Amman to Tunis, Abu-Sharif said the Security Council resolution that condemned the Hebron massacre was general. However, he said, employing it appropriately according to a detailed plan may create more pressure for the evacuation of settlers from the occupied territories. He stressed that in the aftermath of the mosque massacre, the Oslo and Cairo agreements should be reconsidered and some points on the transitional and final stages should be discussed.

He admitted that the Palestinian and Arab campaign of protest against the massacre did not rise to the level of the event, adding that despite its tragic nature, this massacre was a chance for the Palestinians and Arabs to intensively pressure the United States into forcing Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Links Between 'Jordanian Afghans,' Hekmatyar Cited

JN1703174994 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 19-25 Mar 94 p 2

[Text] A minister has revealed to SHIHAN that the defendants arrested after placing weapons and explosives in al-Qasr, al-Karak, have strong ties with one of the leaders of the Afghan revolution.

The minister said security quarters found messages exchanged between the defendants and Golboddin Hekmatyar, leader of the militias opposing the government of [Afghan President Borhanoddin] Rabbani.

In another development, confessions by those accused of the recent explosions in Amman, the Jordanian Afghans, have led to the arrest of elements affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Suwaylih branch. It was discovered that one of the group leaders is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. This leader confessed that one of the Muslim Brotherhood officials in charge in al-Baq'ah and Suwaylih was involved in the explosions. Confessions show this took place without the knowledge of the Muslim Brotherhood leadership, and that Saudi funds and Islamic relief organizations finance the extremist organizations, not only in Jordan, but also in Egypt and Algeria.

Cabinet Dissolves LF Party, Suspends TV, Radio

Samahah Statement on Cabinet Resolutions

NC2303210094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2005 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Statement issued by the Council of Ministers following an emergency session in B'abda Palace on 23 March; read by Information Minister Michel Samahah—live or recorded]

[Text] Lebanon has emerged from the painful war and its various effects and covered a long distance along the road toward reviving its society with its democratic institutions, its administrative and security apparatuses, its production sectors, and its infrastructure. Lebanon determinedly and courageously shoulders the responsibility of resisting and standing fast against the unrestrained Israeli aggression against its land and people. And Lebanon was preparing for national and regional developments, relying in this on its national harmony and full coordination with its Arab brothers, when a scheme feeding off the Israeli source emerged in the homeland to target the country's unity, freedom, and immunity. Some of those offended by the restoration of social peace did not hesitate to get involved in that scheme to realize the enemy's objectives as well as the suspicious ends that started to appear in the form of calls for self-enforced security and for reviewing the state's unity.

What happened at the Sayyidat al-Najat Church in Zuq Mikha'il and before that along the al-Balamant road and the central headquarters of the Lebanese Phalangist Party, in addition to the explosive charges that were placed in cultural and educational centers, the assaults on men of religion and religious places, the desecration of graves, the printing and publishing of leaflets that instigate sectarian strife, and the spreading of rumors that incite, all constitute irrefutable evidence that the most sacred foundations of Lebanon's existence are being targeted.

Against all this, the Council of Ministers would like to affirm the following:

1. Lebanon will not take a bystander's position on these developments. Since the criminal intentions were uncovered and the terrorist operations emerged, Lebanon has been determined to abort attempts that target its stability and seek to harm its peace and reconstruction march;

2. The Council of Ministers highly appreciates the efforts and sacrifices made by the security forces, including the Army and the internal, public, and state security forces. These efforts have led to uncovering the dimensions of the conspiracy, exposing its planners, and arresting its perpetrators. The Council reaffirms its earlier decisions to entrust the Lebanese Army with the task of deploying over all the Lebanese territories to protect the homeland's unity, the sovereignty of the law, and the society's safety;

3. The Council of Ministers has adopted a set of measures to protect the country, maintain its domestic security, and deter the conspirators regardless of their affiliations. It will not tolerate the view of self-enforced security or the establishment of individual security cantons anywhere in Lebanon;

4. The Council of Ministers calls on the mass media to deal with things responsibly and to continue to contribute to the peace march within the framework of the laws that will be referred to the esteemed Chamber of Deputies to organize audiovisual media and protect public freedoms;

5. The Council of Ministers turns to the international community and the sponsors of the peace conference to draw their attention to the seriousness of the terrorist actions Israel is undertaking against the unity of our homeland and the safety of our people in an attempt to strike at Lebanon's peace and regional peace chances at the same time.

The Cabinet confirms that Lebanon, which regained the unity of its institutions and impregnability, and, which valiantly resisted the Israeli aggression, will allow no one to strike at its achievements. The state, which is committed to the constitutional principles and institutions and to the democratic parliamentary system, will continue to relentlessly safeguard and defend everyone's security, freedoms, and rights.

Accordingly, the Cabinet has issued a group of resolutions led by Decree No. 4908. President of the Republic, in accordance with the Constitution and the Associations Law issued on 3 August 1909 and its amendments, particularly Article III, and in accordance with (?Notification) No. 178AD dated 10 September 1991 granted on establishing the association called the Lebanese Forces Party in Beirut, and in accordance with the Interior Minister's proposal and following the approval of the Council of Ministers on 23 March 1994, the following is decreed:

Article I: Notification No. 178AD dated 10 September 1991 issued for the establishment of the association called the Lebanese Forces Party in Beirut is withdrawn. The association is hereby dissolved.

Article II: This decree shall be published, conveyed when necessary, and will go into force when issued.

The Cabinet has also adopted a group of measures. Article II of the Amnesty Law issued on 26 August 1991 defined the crimes covered by the Amnesty Law. These include some crimes committed against the state's internal security, political crimes, or so-called general or local political crimes. They also include some crimes stipulated in the Military Penal Law, crimes of possessing and carrying any kind of weapon, and crimes of abduction and confiscation of freedom. The legislator aimed at that time to lay to rest a tragic past that almost wrecked the country and its system. But the legislator cautioned that the criminals who benefited from the amnesty should not return to their habits and should not commit crimes such as those that were included in the amnesty.

So the last paragraph of Article II of the law has stipulated the following:

Crimes of an excessive and repeated nature or crimes perpetrated after this law is issued [words indistinct].

Article 317 of the Penal Law stipulates that every action, piece of writing, or speech that aims to incite religious or racist discords or to instigate disputes among the various sects and among the nation's members should be punished.

Since the country, after 28 March 1991 [as heard], and especially very recently, has been the scene of more crimes against the state's internal security—crimes formerly covered by the general amnesty—or crimes of a similar nature including car bombings, bombings of worshippers, the placing of explosive devices in densely populated areas, including schools, and acts seeking to undermine the state's public order and security, weaken national unity, harm the country's basic interests, and provoke sedition;

Since some audio and visual media continue to go to extreme lengths to broadcast news and commentaries likely to provoke sectarian fanaticisms;

Since the Weapons and Ammunition Law issued on 12 June 1959 specified a maximum three-year prison sentence for the unlicensed possession and transport of military weapons;

And since this penalty is not considered a sufficient deterrent in the current circumstances and conditions,

The Cabinet has decided the following:

First, the justice minister is requested to draw the attention of the concerned judicial authorities to the aforementioned legal penalties, particularly the last paragraph of Article II of the Amnesty Law issued on 26 March 1991 [as heard] and the second paragraph of Article IV of the same law, and to instruct these authorities when necessary to resume the prosecution of crimes that are no longer covered by the amnesty and those crimes that were perpetrated after 26 March 1991 [as heard]—the crimes that caused the forfeiture of the said amnesty.

Second, as of midnight on 23 March, all visual and audio media, except Tele-Liban and Lebanese radio [Beirut Radio Lebanon], are banned from broadcasting news and programs that are directly or indirectly political until the Audiovisual Media Law is passed and goes into force.

Tuesday 29 March 1994 has been set as a date for an extraordinary Cabinet session to make a final decision on the Audiovisual Media Bill.

Any media station that does not abide by this decision will be prevented from further broadcasting and immediately closed.

The Internal Security Forces, assisted by the Army, are instructed to implement this decision against violators.

Third, the justice minister, the minister of national defense, and other concerned ministers are requested to submit the necessary bills to enact stiffer penalties on the aforementioned crimes to the point where they become a real deterrent. This will be done to deter those who wish to exploit the country's atmosphere of liberty.

The information minister conveyed to the Cabinet a recommendation by the Chamber of Deputies' Finance Committee during its discussion of a bill increasing the capital of the Tele-Liban Company. The recommendation urges the state to own all the shares of this company. The prime minister, who is the proprietor of the private sector's share in this company, showed responsiveness to this recommendation. The Cabinet consequently decided that the state should buy the private sector's share in this company and instructed the information and finance ministers to carry out the necessary legal measures for this purpose.

Samahah Holds News Conference

NC2403094194 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2019 GMT 23 Mar 94

[News conference by Information Minister Michel Samahah with unidentified correspondents at B'abda Palace on 23 March—live or recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr. Minister, you said....

[Samahah, interrupting] Just a minute. Ask your questions one at a time.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, you said that [words indistinct] by the Council of Ministers to study the draft law on organizing the media. Since the media are still capable of broadcasting, is there a public pledge regarding a specified period of time for the draft to be finalized?

[Samahah] First and foremost, there is a pledge regarding the security of the homeland. There is a pledge regarding the security of the citizens. There is a pledge on freedoms. If you followed the statement properly, the printed media still has all its rights safeguarded by the law on printed media. The government's concern at this point in time is for our homeland to weather the storm blowing over it now. This storm takes us back to dark days. The government wishes to put an end to these dark days in every possible way. The government guarantees the rights of citizens to acquire information through the printed media at this stage and affirms that it will finalize the law on audio and visual media during its session on Tuesday, 29 March, and refer it to the Chamber of Deputies. This will give all media organizations that wish to continue broadcasting within the law the possibility to do so and practice their concern about freedom and the security of the citizens and the homeland within the framework of the laws that are being applied.

[Correspondent] Do you expect any security reactions from the parties that have been harmed by these decisions?

[Samahah] As a government, it is only natural for us to expect everything. This is why we have instructed all security forces, the Lebanese Army, the Internal Security Forces, the State Security Forces, and the Public Security Forces to continue their efforts in keeping peace and stability in the homeland and for the citizens.

[Correspondent] Is there any intention to arrest some officials? [question is not answered]

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] to stop the newscasts of audio and visual media due to one issue to [word indistinct]. However, there are some media organs that are abiding by the state's laws....

[Samahah, interrupting] That is very true, but the law applies to all equally. We are at a very crucial stage now. We will finalize the law and within the framework of this law, media organs will resume their operations, provided they agree to function within the limits of the law. They will then continue informing the public through the audio and visual media by abiding to the audio and visual media law. While waiting for this to happen, the experiences of the past weeks and the attempts at shaking the stability in our homeland at this sensitive stage prompts us all to become more aware, open our eyes wider, join our ranks closer, and review all the methods we have thought about or practiced previously. We should go back four years in our memory to see where our homeland was and where it is now. The project for stability and unity in the homeland is worth our best shot and not sacrificing it for the sake of things, which though important, are not as important as the stability we are enjoying in our homeland.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, [words indistinct] the public media [words indistinct] the private media that are disrupting the march of the homeland.

[Samahah] The private media that is disrupting the march of the homeland has no place in this homeland. There is no point in responding to it, because it has no place in the homeland.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, what were your personal feelings when you announced measures stopping all newscasts and political programs?

[Samahah] My real feelings were a sense of responsibility before the danger that is threatening all of us. Have you not had enough of dodging shells? Have you not had enough jumping from one catastrophe to the other? Have you not had enough going from one sad mother to another? Let us handle this situation at this stage and we will all emerge in the light with greater joy.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, with respect to the security measures you have taken in Kasrawan, [words indistinct]. Today the security situation in the south is going through many [word indistinct]. Some circles have conjectured that perhaps there is pressure on the government not to declare the results of the investigations?

[Samahah] The same conspiracy is moving from one area to the other. The same Israeli enemy is moving, along with its shells and mines, from the south to the inside. We all have to demonstrate solidarity in confronting this scheme wherever it may be.

[Correspondent] Are there any practical steps to confront this situation?

[Samahah] I believe there are some steps that we have announced. There are some issues that will be implemented and the security units have been instructed to do so. In addition, the judiciary is proceeding with its measures. We shall not interfere in its business. The judiciary is performing its duties within the framework of the Lebanese law that allows a defendant to have a defense lawyer and to be tried publicly within the framework of the applicable laws. We have heard requests for public trials. All trials in Lebanon since independence have been public and will remain public. Before the law, all citizens have the right to engage lawyers to defend them. They have equal rights before the applicable legislations, which guarantee the personal rights and public freedoms.

[Correspondent] With the issuance of the law, what do you have to say to the representatives of the media organs?

[Samahah and correspondents speaking at the same time] [Words indistinct]

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]?

[Samahah] This is a decision taken by the Council of Ministers and I would prefer not to delve into the details of setting dates. I hope we will overcome what we are going through quickly. We hope the law on audio and visual media will be issued speedily, and we will come back and meet with you before these cameras. We shall not miss you in the meantime because you work in the audio and visual media as well as in the printed media.

[Correspondents speaking at the same time] [Words indistinct].

[Samahah] Would you please listen to each other?

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, do you expect any popular reaction to the decision that you have taken?

[Samahah] I think the people are concerned about having their children go to school in the morning and return home without fears of explosions and without the various distortions we have been hearing recently, such as rumors and nerve-racking stories. Let the people have a peaceful time. People in Lebanon want to live in peace. A citizen is born in Lebanon to live in peace, freedom, and quiet, not to have the nightmare of explosions, fears, and terror follow them from district to district and region to region.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Samahah] I cannot hear you.

[Correspondent] [Word indistinct] in the south [word indistinct] for everyone. Radios and televisions provide greater coverage than the official station.

[Samahah] Who says so?

[Correspondent] I can see and hear.

[Samahah] I am also minister of information and can see and hear.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] geographically, the radios are very useful. If there is the possibility regarding the issue of the south only, [words indistinct].

[Samahah] Let us not delve into this subject. No one party cares more than another about confronting the enemy and informing the citizens about the dangers of events in the south. The official radio, if you have been listening to it, and Lebanese television are covering all these issues. We call on you to cooperate with them in covering these events.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] former Prime Minister 'Umar Karami regarding gathering light-caliber weapons. Has the implementation of such measures been discussed?

[Samahah] I believe that one of the duties of the Army, which has been deployed in all areas, is, as was noted in the text of the statement, to control all violations, including gathering weapons. Upon request from the specialized ministers, some new laws have been proposed to take into consideration all these abnormal events in Lebanon and make the citizens live with the legitimate government under the protection of the Lebanese security forces, not security islands and individual security measures. It should be known what sort of licensed weapons each individual has and how it is moved from one place to another.

[Correspondent] Has the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies been contacted and his opinion sought regarding these measures?

[Samahah] Are you new here? Don't you know that there is a separation of powers and that the executive authority was meeting today? If the legislative authority has a different opinion, it is the master of its own domain and will express its opinion on it.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the four of five who are said to be responsible of the crime?

[Samahah] The Cabinet has not issued arrest warrants. The arrest warrants were issued by an investigative judge trusted by everybody. Only two days ago, those who are now saying these things expressed confidence in him. Therefore, as part of the separation of powers, the judiciary is independent of executive authority, which the Cabinet represents, and so we cannot interfere in such matters and I have no authority to answer such kinds of questions. There is a judge who is doing his job and all Lebanese must comply with his orders. Once things reach the court, and I hope this will be soon, every defendant will have a lawyer to defend his case before the judicial council.

[Correspondent] You have not spoken about the situation in the south. Is there anything new in the message that the U.S. ambassador handed to Prime Minister al-Hariri?

[Correspondent] There is a reiteration of the U.S. position on the need to calm things down and a reiteration of the Lebanese position—namely, that calming things down will come, first and foremost, from ending the occupation of Lebanese territory and, consequently, regaining the territory and the having the occupiers depart.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Samahah] The judiciary is pursuing all matters, including the issue you just mentioned, and no obstacles are stopping the judiciary. Today's measures prove that there will be no cover-up in anything whatsoever, that there is a functioning state, and that there is a state that has a responsibility toward its citizens and before history for the future of the homeland, and it will not shirk this responsibility.

[Correspondent] Did you discuss the 19 September [words indistinct] in today's meeting?

[Samahah] We discussed all issues. If you wanted to score a point before being stopped from going on the air, you just did it. Thank you all.

Declaration of 'State of Emergency' Seen

NC2403102494 Paris AFP in English 0905 GMT 24 Mar 94

[By Hala Boncompagni]

[Text] Beirut, March 24 (AFP)—A government ban on a Christian party and private news programs was seen here Thursday [24 March] as an unofficial declaration of a state of emergency.

Information Minister Michel Samahah, who announced the measures at the end of a five-hour cabinet meeting on

Wednesday, accused Israel of colluding with Lebanese parties in a bid to destabilise Lebanon.

The government charged that Israel was carrying out "terrorist activities in a bid to harm unity and peace in Lebanon, and the chances of peace in the region."

Samahah said that the media ban would take effect from midnight Wednesday until the government can come up with a law to regulate the media in Lebanon.

The cabinet would meet next Tuesday to discuss the legislation, he said.

But until then news coverage would be strictly limited to state-run Radio Liban [Beirut Radio Lebanon] and Tele Liban. Radio and television stations that violate the ban will be shut down, Samahah said.

The unprecedented moves came after Lebanese police arrested on Wednesday Fu'ad Malik, the second-in-command of the Lebanese Forces (LF), a militia disbanded at the end of the 1975-1990 war which had become a political party.

Malik was taken into custody in connection with the bombing of a church last month in which 10 worshippers were killed. The judge investigating the attack identified seven other suspects as members of the LF.

The measures amount to "an unofficial declaration of a state of emergency in the country," a government official told the independent Arabic-language newspaper AL-NAHAR.

"It's a counter-coup to the coup which would have taken place if plans for destabilisation had been successful," he added.

"Good for them. The Lebanese Forces made us cower in shelters for 20 years while they destroyed the country," a taxi driver said about the former militia's involvement in the Lebanese war.

He also applauded the decision to ban private news program saying: "We've been poisoned by too many news bulletins each day, too many radios giving their opinion. It's just as well."

But opposition MP Najah Wakim warned that he will try to fight the government's media ban, stressing that it was an infringement on political freedoms.

"The right to broadcast news should not be confined to the state run media only. Every radio and television has the right to broadcast news," he said.

The Lebanese press hailed the measures while Lebanon's 20 radio and television stations—except for the pro-Israeli Voice of the South—complied with the ban, which also covered political talk shows.

LF radio, Voice of Free Lebanon [(Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon], and their television, Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast music instead of its scheduled news bulletins.

Sawt al-Sha'b [(Clandestine) Voice of the People], run by the Communist party, issued a statement saying it would abide by the ban but urged the authorities to take immediate steps to issue a law regulating the media in Lebanon.

Authorities earlier this month lashed out against private stations for leaking findings of the investigation into the bombing of Our Lady of Deliverance church north of Beirut.

They charged that some private media, which flourished during the country's civil war, were spreading rumors that it said could fan disputes between the country's Moslem and Christian communities.

LF Radio Announces Compliance

NC2303221694 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 2145 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] The Council of Ministers tonight issued a series of decisions, including one disbanding the Lebanese Forces Party and banning news broadcasts in the audio-visual media, apart from those on Lebanon Television and Radio. The decision becomes effective at midnight tonight and will remain in effect until the media organization law is issued.

Consequently, Radio Free Lebanon announces to its listeners that it will abide by the Council of Ministers decision issued on 23 March suspending the transmission of news and political programs in the audio-visual media apart from Lebanon Television and Radio until the media organization law is issued.

We will announce news times after this law is issued. Promising listeners to stay on your side, something to which you have always been accustomed.

VOL To Abide by Suspension Resolution

NC2303221194 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2135 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Unscheduled announcement—read by announcer]

[Text] The Voice of Lebanon has absolute faith in the homeland, defends freedom and truth, possesses an official permit from the Lebanese Government, and has won the confidence of the listener, who always looks for the whole truth.

The Voice of Lebanon always endeavors to reiterate coexistence and national accord and the unity of the Lebanese, continues to defend the Lebanese rights, dignity, and freedom, is aware of the critical situation and stage, and preserves the supremacy of the state and law.

Because of these things, the management of the Voice of Lebanon has decided to abide by the Cabinet resolution calling for a temporary halt to newscasts and political programs as of midnight.

VOM To Honor Cabinet Decision

NC2303224094 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 2200 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] In compliance with the Council of Ministers' decision tonight suspending the transmission of audio-visual media newscasts and programs that are directly or indirectly political until the media law is issued, the Voice of the Mountain radio will cease transmitting newscasts and political programs as of now.

Security Forces Crack Down in Beirut, al-Biqa'

NC2403065194 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The Lebanese Army and the Internal Security forces have intensified security measures in accordance with the Lebanese Government decision. They have deployed mobile and foot patrols and set up fixed and mobile checkpoints in Beirut's southern suburb. The army and Internal Security Forces are continuing the security measures taken in the Kasrawan area.

A NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent reports that the security forces on the al-Biqa' plain, helped by Syrian Arab forces units, yesterday evening began implementing similar security measures in the area, especially in Ba'labakk and al-Hirmil.

LF Party Members Arrested for Church Bombing

Judge: Suspects Belong to Ja'ja' Group

NC2303143294 Paris AFP in English 1418 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Beirut, March 23 (AFP)—A judge investigating the bombing of a Maronite Christian church last month in which 10 people were killed said Wednesday [23 March] seven of the nine suspects belonged to the former Christian Lebanese Forces militia led by Samir Ja'ja'.

Judge Joseph Furayhah said in a statement that four of the suspects were still on the run.

The February 27 attack on the Our Lady of Deliverance Church at Zuq Mikhai'l, north of Beirut, also left 54 people wounded.

Arrest Warrants Issued for LF Officials

NC2303175794 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Investigating Judge Joseph Frayhah has issued official arrest warrants against the suspects Jirjis Tawfiq al-Khuri, Antoinette Yusuf Shahin, and Simon Edmund al-Kharyati—all officials in the Lebanese Forces and who are in already in custody. Warrants were also issued for the arrest of Makram al-Mursi 'Ali and Jerome Yusuf Diya.

Judge Frayhah also issued arrest warrants against the suspects Tony Ilyas 'Ubayd, the head of the intervention and protection branch of the Lebanese Forces security apparatus; Rushdi Tawfiq Ra'd, alias Nabil Fawzi alias Nabil Munassa, official of the same security apparatus; John Yusuf Shahin, alias Asad, official of the same security apparatus; and Vera Munassa, an official of the same Lebanese Forces security apparatus. They must be taken into custody.

The investigating judge will continue interrogating other people who are already in custody to issue the necessary remand orders against them.

Sources close to the investigation have revealed that several individuals now in custody have residence permits abroad and regularly moved between Lebanon and these other countries under various aliases, using forged passports of several nationalities. They used to enter Lebanon avoiding the official entry points, in fishing boats, via tourist areas, or by boarding Lebanese vessels on the high seas.

Malik Arrested in Bombing Probe

NC2303164994 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1640 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Retired Major Fu'ad Malik, second in command of the Lebanese Forces and current chairman of the Lebanese Forces Administrative Committee, was arrested today in accordance with a judiciary warrant in a probe into the bombing of the Sayyidat al-Najat Church in Zuq.

The security forces detained Malik in the Nahr al-Kalb area in implementation of legal and judiciary procedures.

Ja'ja' Reacts to Arrests on Church Blast

JN2303195794 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Lebanese Forces Commander Dr. Samir Ja'ja' by radio correspondent Kamal Tarabayh in the studio on 23 March—recorded]

[Text] [Ja'ja'] My response [to charges of alleged involvement by members of the Lebanese Forces security organization in the bombing of the Sayyidat al-Najat Church] is as follows: First, there has been no security body in the Lebanese Forces [LF] since the dissolving of the militias four years ago. Second, what is taking place is an ethical, political, and media crime against liberties in Lebanon. Third: I have never heard of the so-called Jiris Tawfiq al-Khuri. Simon Edmond al-Kharyati was a member of the Lebanese Forces before the dissolution of the militias. With regard to those against whom arrest warrants were issued, they left Lebanon more than one year ago.

[Tarabayh] Do you admit some of these elements were members of the LF before the dissolution of the militias?

[Ja'ja'] Yes. [words indistinct] I told you who were with LF when it was still militias.

[Tarabayh] Who, among the suspects, were members of the LF before the militias were dissolved?

[Ja'ja'] Among the detainees, Simon Edmond al-Kharyati was a member of the militias. Tony Ilyas 'Ubayd left Lebanon at least one and one-half years ago and is now in Australia.

[Tarabayh] What about the arrest of Colonel Fu'ad Malik, who is still a member of the LF?

[Ja'ja'] Yes, of course. I consider this a political issue which aims at striking at the people's belief in their political, social, and religious institutions. Tony Ilyas 'Ubayd left Lebanon one and one-half years ago; Rushdi Tawfiq left Lebanon three years ago; and John Yusuf Shahin left Lebanon one year ago. Documents will be presented about the places of residence of those persons: Two in Australia and one in Canada. This will prove they have not returned to Lebanon since their departure.

[Tarabayh] It has been reported that LF security was certainly infiltrated by the Israeli Mosad. Do you admit this?

[Ja'ja'] Never.

[Tarabayh] It is said that former members of LF security were trained by and had good links with the Israeli Mosad. These are facts.

[Ja'ja'] I ask for public trials and defense lawyers. Investigations will reveal all facts to public opinion and the media.

[Tarabayh] What are the steps to be taken by the LF in light of this situation?

[Ja'ja'] We will demand public trials to see who is right.

[Tarabayh] What is the situation now in Ghidras?

[Ja'ja'] The situation has not changed. There are more restrictions on people coming to Ghidras.

[Tarabayh] Thank you, Dr. Samir Ja'ja'.

Ja'ja' Rejects Accusations

NC2303205194 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] In response to the arrest warrants issued against those accused in connection with the explosion at the Sayyidat al-Najat Church, which noted that some of them belong to the Lebanese Forces [LF], and to the detention of Fu'ad Malik, head of the Administrative Committee of the Lebanese Forces Party, LF Commander Dr. Samir Ja'ja' held a news conference this evening in which he rejected the accusation of LF involvement in the explosion.

He explained that the warrants were issued in absentia since those accused have been abroad for a long time. Anyone can get in contact with them and ask them. I have never heard of two of the accused, who have been said to be members of the LF.

Dr. Ja'ja' maintained that the detention of Fu'ad Malik is political. He hoped that he will be allowed to appoint a defense lawyer, according to law and logic. Dr. Ja'ja' renewed his call for open trials immediately. He affirmed that he is ready for anything. He also affirmed that the truth will come out and justice will take its course. He said: We are reassured about our situation. We are very confident, and our conscience is free.

The LF commander said: If they want to stop the LF from exercising its political activity, let them try a much easier way. Let them stop the LF without going to all this trouble and misleading the public.

Dr. Ja'ja' affirmed that pressure, accusations, and such measures will not change the convictions of the LF.

Lebanese Forces Threaten Legal Action

NC2203125994 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1157 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Statement issued by the Lebanese Forces central media apparatus on 22 March—read by announcer]

[Excerpt] Some mass media have tended in the past few days to publish information citing unknown and undeclared sources concerning the ongoing investigations into the explosions that recently targeted the Lebanese people.

After returning to the competent judicial authorities to ascertain the validity of the circulated and published reports, rumors, leaks, details, names, accusations, and fabricated scenarios, the Lebanese Forces were assured they were false.

Hence the appeal to the mass media to beware the risks involved in falling for misleading falsification campaigns being launched against the forces and other spiritual and partisan quarters. They stress that the mass media should shoulder their nationalist responsibility in such critical circumstances by refraining from publishing any reports or information unless they are issued by the competent judicial authorities who have the legal authorization to comment on the progress of the ongoing investigations.

If such assaults continue against Lebanese Forces' officials and individuals, the forces regret that they will be compelled to take the legal action necessary to preserve their rights, particularly moral rights, against anyone who indulges in falsification, distortion, and libel campaigns or false accusations. [passage omitted]

Sources on Resolution 904, Resumption of Talks

PM2203170794 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Mar 94 p 6

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Damascus Stresses Importance of Coordination 'To Prevent Infiltration Harmful to All'"]

[Text] Damascus—Syria yesterday stressed the importance of coordination and consultation among the Arab parties involved in the peace process in order to prevent any Israeli infiltration [ikhtiraq] "harmful to all." It pointed out that Resolution 904 opens the door to the resumption of bilateral negotiations.

Syrian sources said that the Security Council resolution "has provided a new opportunity to resume the peace negotiations...and will prevent a repetition of the ugly crimes committed by settlers against Palestinian citizens with support from the Israeli Army." The sources added that "the strong condemnation" contained in Resolution 904 "is bound to open the door to the resumption of the negotiations, but in isolation from Israel's maneuvers, which nearly managed to undermine the foundations on whose basis the peace process was launched."

The sources said that Syria's eagerness to rid the peace process of the effects of the Hebron massacre caused Syria to respond to the U.S. Administration's efforts, "as represented in the telephone calls President Hafiz al-Asad received from President Clinton, because Syria expressed every interest in giving the peace process every impetus that is bound to make it a success and achieve its desired aims."

The sources added that Damascus's eagerness prompted it to invite the Arab parties to hold a coordination meeting next April to agree on resuming the negotiations. But they stressed that "it is not important for the negotiations to begin today or tomorrow. The important thing is Israel's compliance with the need to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy so that a just and comprehensive peace can be achieved."

After revealing that Syria has invited the parties concerned to meet in Damascus, the sources said that Syria "did that because of its absolute belief in joint Arab action and because of its awareness that the coordination issue and commitment to this issue mean denying Israel any opportunity to try to achieve another infiltration along the lines of the Oslo agreement."

Al-Shar', U.S. Official Meet, Discuss Issues

JN2303171394 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' today received Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs. The meeting was attended by Martin Indyk, U.S. presidential assistant for Middle East affairs; Dan Kurtzer, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state; and Christopher Ross, the U.S. ambassador in Damascus. The meeting was also attended by Raslan 'Allush, the assistant foreign minister; Dr. Najdi al-Jazzar, head of the Foreign Ministry's U.S. Desk, and Walid al-Mu'allim, the Syrian ambassador in Washington.

Discussion focused on bilateral relations and means to improve them in light of the agreement President Hafiz al-Asad and U.S. President Bill Clinton reached during the Geneva summit.

Paper Stresses U.S. Role in Peace Talks

JN2403095494 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 24 Mar 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Peace and the U.S. Role," TISHRIN writes: President Hafiz al-Asad has received a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton concerning the peace process and means of promoting it. He also discussed recent developments with U.S. envoys Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk and the two officials reaffirmed the United States' commitment toward achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

The paper adds: In fact, U.S.-Syrian contacts have continued ceaselessly since the recent Geneva summit. Washington has repeatedly voiced its appreciation for Syria's vital role in the peace process and paid tribute to its sincere efforts.

The paper says: After the Hebron massacre, the world became convinced that the only way to end tension in the region and establish peace is to put an end to the Israeli occupation—Army and settlements, to return the occupied territories to their rightful owners, and to accept the objective and balanced Syrian proposals.

The paper notes what President Hafiz al-Asad said—that partial solutions do not make peace and that the only possible peace means the end of occupation and the return of rights. This is the honorable peace and the peace of the brave.

The paper stresses that the events that have occurred since the signing of the stumbling Oslo agreement have confirmed that Syria was right and that the peace of the brave, which it advocates, agrees entirely with the UN Security Council resolutions and the substance of the U.S. initiative. They also show that without this peace, the Middle East will have no chance of escaping the cycle of violence and turmoil.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: Undoubtedly, the United States has a principal role to play in bringing about the desired change in the Israeli position, considering the huge aid it gives to Tel Aviv and its patronage of the peace process and commitment to achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

Paper on Joint Syrian-Lebanese Committee Meetings

JN2403084294 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 13 Feb 94 p 3

[Excerpts] Damascus—The technical subcommittees stemming from the Joint Syrian-Lebanese Industrial Committee held a meeting yesterday in the presence of Engineer Dr. Ahmad Nizam al-Din, the Syrian minister of industry; and Lebanon's Nasri Khuri, the secretary general of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council. The conferees discussed topics related to developing and strengthening industrial cooperation between the two countries, and drafting the necessary decisions and recommendations that will then be referred to the Joint Industrial Committee. [passage omitted]

In a statement to AL-THAWRAH, Nasri Khuri said: Today's meeting of the technical subcommittees is one of a series of meetings and contacts that these committees are holding to form the framework of cooperation and coordination between the two fraternal countries under the provisions of the Treaty of Fraternity and Coordination and on the basis of the agreements signed and ratified in accordance with the constitutional procedures in both countries.

Several committees were formed under the provisions of the Economic and Social Cooperation Agreement. These committees are: The "Joint Industrial Committee," which in turn has formed five technical subcommittees, which are holding their meeting today; the "Joint Agricultural Committee," which held its meeting earlier and agreed to establish a subcommittee for marketing agricultural products, and which will hold its second meeting on Saturday; the "Joint Electricity Committee," which is scheduled to meet today, Sunday 13 February; the "Joint Water Committee," which is discussing several matters relating to joint waters and which has already held two meetings; the "Joint Health Committee" and the "Joint Transport Committee," which also held their meetings.

The Joint Economic Committee, which has prepared a general idea of how to implement the Economic and Social Cooperation Agreement, will hold its meeting in the middle of next month.

There is also a "Joint Tourism Committee," a "Communications Committee," a "Committee for Facilitating Border Procedures," and a "Committee for facilitating Bases for Certificate of Origin." We are now in the process of forming a "Joint Committee for Labor and Social Affairs" and a permanent committee for planning. All these committees are operating under the supervision of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council and they submit their results to the Economic and Social Cooperation Agreement committee, which consists of all the competent and concerned ministers from both sides in the two fraternal countries, in order to make the necessary decisions on them prior to submitting then to the Followup and Coordination Commission.

We must point out here that within the framework of the Treaty of Cooperation and Coordination between the fraternal countries there is a "Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs," and a "Joint Committee for Defense and Security." This is in addition to the "Economic and Social Committee." These specialized committees, which are stipulated in the treaty, will begin holding their meetings in a periodic and organized manner in the near future in order to put the provisions of the cooperation and coordination agreement into practice and actual implementation.

Peace Process at 'Final Turning Point'

PM2303141294 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Damascus: We Will Show Every Possible Response If Change Emerges in Israel's Position"]

[Text] Damascus, AL-HAYAH—Syria yesterday stressed that the Arab parties concerned with the peace process will show every possible response in order to establish peace if a change emerges in the Israeli position toward the establishment of a "real peace" when the negotiations resume.

Syrian sources said that nothing would achieve "calm and relaxation in the region" like an Israeli initiative to withdraw from the occupied territories. The sources pointed out that the policy of "evasion" has achieved nothing for the Israelis so far, and some 27 months have elapsed since the peace process began. And "the occupation has not achieved, nor will it achieve, security for Israel. Peace is the guarantee of security, and peace depends on complete withdrawal from the occupied territories."

The sources said that the peace process between the Arabs and Israelis is now "at the final turning point: Either it will overcome the challenge successfully or it will fail," especially after the Hebron massacre. The sources pointed out that the Jordanian, Lebanese, and Syrian tracks have not achieved any progress so far, "as the Israelis spend their negotiations with the Jordanians talking about economic cooperation, not withdrawal from the occupied Jordanian territories."

The Syrian sources, which reflect the official view, went on to say that Syria has invited the parties concerned to meet in Damascus in the light of Israel's refusal to comply with the demand for peace and withdrawal from the occupied territories. The sources said: "If a change emerges in the Israeli position to move the peace process toward the establishment of a real peace, the Arab parties will show every possible response" when the bilateral negotiations resume in Washington.

Radio Urges Israel's 'Real Involvement' for Peace

JN2303153394 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Dennis Ross, the U.S. Administration's envoy to the region, has begun talks in Damascus on ways to push the peace process forward and end the stalemate that plagues it. His arrival was preceded by direct telephone contacts between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton and between President al-Asad and King Husayn and President al-Hirawi. An agreement was reached to invite the Arab parties concerned with the peace process to hold a meeting soon in order to consider resuming the Washington talks in light of UN Security Council Resolution 904. This resolution strongly denounces the Israeli massacre at the holy Ibrahimi Mosque. It calls for international protection for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and for the concentration of efforts to push the peace process forward.

The fact is that Syrian-U.S. contacts have been active since the recent Geneva summit between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton. The U.S. Administration clearly announced that Syria is playing a basic role in making the peace process a success and that Syria exerted major efforts to prevent the collapse of this process after the atrocious Hebron massacre. All members of the international community took the Hebron events and their negative impact on the peace process very seriously. This horrible massacre affirms to the entire world the need to end Israeli occupation of Arab territory and to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the Madrid formula and Security Council resolutions.

Israeli prevarication for the past 27 months has prevented any real progress. It is no longer acceptable on both the Arab and international levels. It is time for Israel to stop playing with its bargaining chips. Either it demonstrates real involvement in the peace process and a clear commitment to its bases and requirements, or it frankly rejects this process. Real involvement means, first and foremost, a firm pledge to withdraw from the occupied territories in exchange for peace. Rejection will mean pushing the region to the verge of an explosion. It will represent a blatant disregard of all international efforts and of international legitimacy principles and charters.

Syria has always shouldered its responsibilities toward peace and has been loyal to UN principles and resolutions. It has worked with all its strength to make the U.S. initiative a success. On several occasions, it effectively contributed to rescuing this initiative from Israel's plots. The meeting between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton in Geneva gave a strong push to the peace process.

However, instead of responding to the spirit of Geneva and its results, Israel intentionally cast doubts. The result was the holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre that shook the conscience of the world and confirmed the need to move the peace process beyond the impasse caused by Israeli intransigence.

Since the start of the U.S. initiative, Syria has made it clear that peace in the region depends on ending Israeli occupation. Peace cannot prevail if it does not provide right and justice and does not end Israel's attacks and its repressive and settlement practices.

Syria has repeatedly said peace and occupation cannot coexist. Partial and incomplete solutions that do not end the occupation and remove the settlements will not bring the region any closer to peace. Instead, they will push it away from peace. Indeed, Syria has stressed that such solutions are time bombs. There is no solution except a just and comprehensive solution that restores the territories and rights and realizes a firm and real peace—the peace of the brave.

All events in the Middle East confirm the soundness of the Syrian stand and reinforce the international conviction that Syria's concept of peace is a sound, comprehensive, and integrated concept. The Oslo agreement was not only obstructed, it led directly to the Hebron massacre. Future developments will not be any less negative if Israel does not submit to the will of the international community and complies with the bases of the Madrid conference that stipulate achieving a just and comprehensive peace on all fronts of the conflict based on Security Council resolutions.

Syria, along with all the Arabs, are seekers of a real peace. The ball is in Israel's court. Israel must choose between peace and occupation, between security and aggression, between stability and settlement, and between becoming a member of the international community and the law of the jungle and the declaration of a war on human values, principles, and laws.

India

Puri, U.S. Envoy Meet, Hold Discussions

BK2303101194 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] The United States assistant secretary of state, Ms. Robin Raphel, today held discussions with her Indian counterpart, Mr. H.S. Puri, joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. According to official sources, the whole gamut of Indo-U.S. relations were discussed during the 90-minute meeting.

Ms. Raphel arrived yesterday on a five-day visit to New Delhi.

Home Minister, U.S. Envoy Meet

BK2303163094 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] The United States says it acknowledges that Pakistan has been encouraging terrorists in Kashmir. Washington will continue to put pressure on Islamabad not to encourage terrorism in the state. This was conveyed by the U.S. assistant secretary of state for South Asia, Ms. Robin Raphel, to a 12-member group of Congress-I MP's [Members of Parliament] during their meeting in New Delhi today. She agreed that a solution to the Kashmir issue should be found by India and Pakistan bilaterally within the framework of the Simla Agreement.

Briefing newsmen, Mr. V.N. Gadgil and Mr. Hanumanthappa said it was agreed that India and the United States should continue their dialogue to remove misunderstandings and misconceptions. The Congress-I MP's told Ms. Raphel that in Kashmir the political process could not be revived because of Islamabad's continued support to terrorists. She agreed that some hired persons were used by militants in the Hazratbal Shrine incident. The MP's told her that Kashmir should not be treated as a communal problem as Pakistan is trying to make out. Other members of the group included Mr. M.M. Jacob, Mr. Sushil Kumar Shinde, Mr. S.S. Ahluwalia, and Mr. Indrajit.

During her meeting with the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, Ms. Raphel reiterated that the United States will continue to urge Pakistan to stop aiding and abetting terrorists operating in India. She conveyed her government's appreciation for India's transparency in Jammu and Kashmir. Ms. Raphel said the main objective of her visit is to clear the misunderstandings created recently and to place Indo-U.S. relations on a sound footing.

The home minister said that certain statements from Washington have adversely affected the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and the Indian people will not tolerate attempts to undermine the nation's territorial integrity.

Earlier, during her meeting with the head of the American Division in the External Affairs Ministry, she discussed the issues on which there are some differences in the positions of the two countries.

Ms. Raphel also met a member of the National Human Rights Commission, Mr. Virendra Dayal. Mr. Dayal told her that respect for human rights is central to India's ethos and traditions and the country is determined to uphold these values.

The Clinton administration's offer to Pakistan in return for a freeze on its nuclear weapons program includes supply of not only F-16 fighters but also P-3 antisubmarine warfare planes. This has been reported by the NEW YORK TIMES. PTI quotes analysts in Washington to say that the proposed plan will not require Pakistan to abandon its nuclear program. On the other hand, the analysts are of the view that the plan would legitimize Pakistan's nuclear program so that it could be used as a lever against India.

Commentary Assesses Recent Differences With U.S.

BK2303130494 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Commentary by T.V. Venkatachalam, associate editor of NATIONAL HERALD: "Indo-U.S. Relations"]

[Text] India-U.S. relations have taken some hard knocks of late because of the remarks made by President Bill Clinton and American officials, particularly Ms. Robin L. Raphel, assistant secretary of state, on the sensitive subject of Kashmir. It is a matter of history that in the evolution of Western policy toward the newly independent nations of India and Pakistan, what was proper and legal according to the accepted international law and norms was not always followed. Cold War diplomacy and strategic considerations had their impact on the policy. Over a period of time, however, certain degrees of balance came to be restored in the relationship even before the Cold War ended. The big powers recognized that India has its legitimate national interest and this country on its part gave the benefit of doubt to those who were treading on its toes, conceding that it might not be intentional.

The recent U.S. statement questioning the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India may not mean a change in the previous policy formulation as far as the U.S. is concerned. The American utterances, however, come at a time when Pakistan is engaged in a proxy war to destabilize the situation in the area, pursuing the same sterile policies which landed the subcontinent in costly wars in the past, hurting their people. In such a situation, India does not expect friendly nations to queer the pitch for her with statements that exacerbate the situation. For India, or for that matter for any country, it is a serious issue if its sovereignty and unity are questioned. The challenge to the fundamental facts of national existence cannot be glossed over with clarification and explanation. It cannot be that properly equipped foreign offices ignore historical facts. The circumstances in which India's secular policy rejecting the two-nation theory based on religious differences became an integral part of Indian thinking and ethos are too recent to be forgotten.

The whole range of Indo-American relations is marked by several positive factors. The two great democracies share so many human values. The potential for mutually beneficial economic and business cooperation is enhanced by India's liberalized economic policies. In the cultural, educational, and technological fields, there are long-standing friendly exchanges. These have to be strengthened at the political level. With due regard to each other's vital interests, it should not be difficult to find solutions to problems arising from the reactivated U.S. policy on Kashmir and the possibility of its supply of some deadly F-16 aircraft to Pakistan which will adversely affect the security situation in the subcontinent.

In the present context, it is a matter of satisfaction that there is an awareness of the issues involved and a measure of goodwill for India in responsible sections in the United States. At a recent hearing of the Senate Foreign Policy Committee, American senators were appreciative of India's vital concerns, including those on Kashmir. Some of the senators sharply criticized the administration's handling of South Asian affairs. Those who were critical of the utterances of Ms. Raphel included Senator Hank Brown, Republican; the former U.S. ambassador to India, Mr. Daniel Patrick [Moynihan], Democrat; and Senator Jesse Helms, Republican. Mr. Daniel Patrick [Moynihan] who visited New Delhi last month and had talks with the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, sought to assure India that there is no change in U.S. stand on Kashmir and America believes that the Simla accord provides a sound basis for the amicable settlement of the issue. To the extent that they recognize the need to reassure India of their bona fides, the American explanations and clarifications are welcome. A real concern for India's vital interest, which in no way conflicts with the national interests of other countries, can help in the ironing out of the differences that have cropped up.

Iran

Security Forces on 'Partial State of Alert'

PM2203111494 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Mar 94 p5

[Excerpts] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Iranian security forces in a number of Iranian cities and areas were placed on a partial state of alert yesterday following reports that armed opposition groups were planning a series of attacks on the occasion of the Iranian new year which begins tomorrow, Monday.

Informed sources have confirmed that the security authorities arrested hundreds of people in a major combing operation and that the detainees included a number of mullahs opposed to the government in Tehran, Shiraz, and Tabriz.

According to some other reports, the current Revolutionary Guard exercises in the Gulf will now be reduced to only four days instead of the seven days originally scheduled. The sources did not say why that decision was made.

An official source has strongly denied opposition claims that 25 armed clashes occurred recently in which about 300 Revolutionary Guard members were killed or wounded.

The sources said that most of the detained mullahs are supporters of Ayatollah Mir Mohammad Rowhani and Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri, both serious candidates for the Shiite leadership. [passage omitted]

The government had some good news yesterday. It announced that it had reached agreements with Austria and Switzerland for the rescheduling of $1.2 billion of debts.

Iran has also concluded a similar agreement with Germany for the rescheduling of $3 billion of debts. Current talks with Japan for the rescheduling of $1.4 billion are close to conclusion. Furthermore, India and China have agreed to hold negotiations for the rescheduling of Iran's debts. That is in addition to talks with 22 creditor countries from Malaysia to Brazil. Iran's short-term debts are estimated at $9 billion and its total foreign debts are believed to be $30 billion.

Commentary Views Aspects of Relations With Syria

LD2203130494 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Iran's commerce minister, Mr. Yahya ol-Eshaq, met with his Syrian counterpart, Mr. Muhammad al-'Imadi, in Damascus yesterday and discussed bilateral trade relations with him. In the meeting, the need for expansion of trade ties and exchange of goods between the two countries was stressed. The two sides also agreed that two separate committees—comprising commercial experts of Iran and Syria—be formed to survey practical ways of promoting commercial cooperation between Tehran and Damascus.

Another important point is that Iran and Syria—as two powerful states of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East—play a sensitive and strategic role in the trend of events in the two regions. They also have relatively common viewpoints on the events taking place in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Based on this matter and also due to common stands of the two sides on such vital political issues as the compromise deal on Gaza and

Jericho and occupation of south Lebanon by the Zionist regime, it is essential that the scope of political ties be expanded to also cover the domain of commercial relations.

During his December visit to Syria, Iran's first vice president, Dr. Habibi, met and conferred with President Hafiz al-Asad and also Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. In the meetings, Dr. Habibi pointed out that Iran has constantly backed stands of Syria as a country in the front line of combat with the Zionist regime. From the standpoint of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this support or consensus between Tehran and Damascus is viewed to be an unavoidable necessity under the sensitive conditions currently prevailing in the Middle East region. Significantly, since the start of the so called Arab-Israel peace talks process, Syria has been under extreme pressure from America and its allies so as to divert it from the principled stand and to force it into accepting the compromise agreements brokered by America and Israel.

Dr. Habibi, who had led high-ranking political and economic delegation to Syria—besides conferring with the key Syrian officials on political events in the region and the world—also spoke of the need for establishing and developing trade relations between the two states. Hence it is imagined that the Monday visit of Iran's commerce minister to Damascus aims at pursuing the earlier agreements on commercial exchanges and including practical ways to implement them.

In general, regarding to Tehran and Damascus, it can be said that politics and economy are in fact two sides of a coin. Hence, enhancement of relations in one sphere makes the expansion of trade exchanges unavoidable. Talks of Iran's commerce minister with the Syrian officials too—in view of the commercial side of these relations—have duly stressed the bolstering of economic ties.